LECTURES

ON

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS,

WITH

Critical Notes and Observations:

BY

REV. W. C. DAVIS.

"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY, IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD, IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM."—Isa. viii, 20.

Qui legit, bene intelligere assidue conator.

Published by the General Convention of the Independent Presbyterian Church.

CHARLESTON, S. C.
PRINTED BY WALKER, EVANS & CO.
No. 3 Broad Street.
1858

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Preface to the Epistle to the Romans.

Why the Epistles in the New Testament were placed in the order in which they stand, I know nŏt; but the most natural order would have been according to the date in which they were written, which is the following: I. Thessalonians; Galatians; II. Thessalonians; I. Corinthians; II. Corinthians; I. Timothy; Romans; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; Philemon; Hebrews; Titus; II. Timothy; James; I. Peter; II. Peter; Jude; I. John; II. John; III. John; Revelation. I had some thoughts of placing them in this order in these Lectures; but, considering that it would be of no great advantage, and also attended with some difficulty to alter the old arrangement, I have followed the beaten track, and placed them in the usual order.

The Epistle to the Romans was written at Corinth, by Tertius, (chapter xvi: v. 22,) who is supposed to be the same as Silas, or Silvanus. This shows that Paul did not always write his epistles with his own hand, but dictated to an amanuensis, or secretary, who wrote for him. It was sent to the church at Rome by Phebe, (chap. xvi. 1, 2,) who was sent by the church of Cenchrea (which was the principal port of Corinth) on some business to Rome. This was St. Paul's seventh Epistle, that we have on record, and was written in the year of our Lord 59, when the Apostle had been about twenty-three years in the apostleship, and was on his second visit to Corinth; and three or four years before he went a prisoner to Rome, and a few months before he set out through Macedonia on his journey to Jerusalem, with the contributions from the European churches to the poor saints in Judea. (See chap. xv. 23–28.)

There seems to be no records in history to inform us when, or by whom, the Church was first planted in Rome. But the most probable conjecture is, that the Gospel was first preached there as it was in Samaria, Phœnicia, Cyprus, Damascus, Antioch, and many other places, by refugees, who fled from Judea at the time of the persecution, on the martyrdom of Stephen; or probably it was carried there by some of the strangers who attended the feast at Jerusalem from Rome on the day of Pentecost, (Acts, ii. 10, compared with Acts, xi. 19.)

These converts to christianity, returning home, or being obliged to fly from the persecution in Jerusalem, carried the Gospel with them. And as it was not necessary in the days of the Apostles for a minister to be licensed by the authority of synods and councils, or by Bishops, or even by the Apostles, themselves Jesus Christ thought proper to call forth whom *He pleased* to the work of the ministry. Hence we find Philip preaching and baptizing in Samaria, Ananias baptizing in Damascus, Apollos preaching at Ephesus, several men from Cyprus and Africa preaching at Antioch, and (as history says) the Eunuch planting a flourishing church in Africa. Very probably some of those strangers from Rome were converted on the day of Pentecost, and carried the Gospel home with them, or some of those who were scattered abroad on the persecution, came not only as far as Phenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, but also went to Rome; for it appears that a church was planted there very soon after the day of Pentecost. It is, however, certain that Paul had not been at Rome before he wrote this Epistle.

This is the most lengthy Epistle the Apostle wrote, and it contains the most systematic reasoning on the plan of the Gospel to be found in the Holy Scriptures. The universal depravity of the human race—the justification by faith through the atonement of the cross—the renovation of the heart, and sanctification in heart and practice. The eternal purpose of God in the salvation of sinners, the order in which the Gospel is rendered effectual, according to God's purpose; the calling of the Gentiles and the rejection of the Jews, &c., are all treated in a logical manner and with great perspicuity, and a masterly strength of reasoning. And indeed, the general principles of the Gospel are handled more particularly as a body of divinity in this Epistle than in any of the other Epistles, or even any of the books of the New Testament.

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proper account of the actual coming of Jesus Christ, and the wonderful things he performed relative to our salvation.

For although the Jews were offended in him, because he appeared amongst them in an humble form, as the son of Joseph and Mary, yet he was only so in his human nature; as he was appointed of God, and was held forth by the prophets to be γενομενε, born of the seed of David, as to his human descent, and as far as flesh and blood were necessary to his mediatorial state.

4. And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

But although our blessed Lord and Redeemer appeared in an humble garb of flesh, and partook of human nature, yet he was abundantly declared to be a divine person, and the eternal Son of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, which raised him from the dead, after he had suffered the ignominious death of the cross. So that the gospel declares the Lord Jesus Christ to be both God and man, in one person, and consequently an all-sufficient Saviour.

Spirit of Holiness. This is a Hebrew phrase, consisting of two substantives placed together, and the last in the genitive case, used as an adjective. So in Psalm xxiii. 3. "Paths of righteousness," means righteous paths.

5. By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name

By the divine authority of this glorious person, who was then manifested to be both God and man, the Apostles, and especially the Apostle Paul, who before was a blasphemer, and a persecutor of Jesus Christ, received this abundant grace; or received a commission to proclaim the boundless mercy of God to sinners. In

Lectures on Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

LECTURE I.

ROMANS I. v. 1–32.

Verse 1. Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an Apostle separated unto the Gospel of God.

The Apostle here, in a very emphatical manner, declared himself to be a servant, acting under the especial authority of Christ; that he was an Apostle, especially called, even in a miraculous manner, to the apostleship, and appointed and set apart to be a preacher of the Gospel, which may properly be called the Gospel of God, as it is the glorious plan which was first conceived by infinite wisdom.

2. (Which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures.)

This glorious gospel was darkly revealed by the prophets of old, in the many promises given of the Messiah, and the prophetic accounts which the prophets gave of his coming in his kingdom and glory. So that the gospel, in reality, was no new thing, although it was now promulgated under a new dispensation, because the Holy Scriptures, by types and prophecies, had all along held out the Messiah to come, as the only Saviour of the world.

3. Concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh.

This Gospel, which the Apostle was called and appointed to preach, was particularly designed to give a

order to this, they were constituted apostles, that through their instrumentality all the nations of the earth, especially the Gentiles, might be brought to obey the Gospel by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory and honor of his name.

6. Among whom ye also are the called of Jesus Christ.

The members of the church at Rome, though at a great distance from Jerusalem, where the Gospel began first to be preached, were, in consequence of the dispensation of the Gospel, made to partake of this unspeakable grace, and were called as well as other Gentiles, and many of them effectually, by the grace of the Gospel, and therefore the Apostle rejoiced in having the privilege and opportunity of addressing this epistle, as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to them, as his Christian brethren.

7. To all who be in Rome, beloved of God, called *to be* saints grace to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle addressed his epistle particularly to those who in consequence of their interest in Christ were taken into the favor of God, and were made partakers of his everlasting and unchangeable love through Jesus Christ, and were called by the Gospel to be members of the church, purified by faith, although they had been unclear Gentiles, yet now were washed, and sanctified, and made meet to be admitted, by the holy ordinance of baptism, among the children of God, and to enjoy the privilege of the Gospel; and as many as were true believers were not only externally and professionally sanctified, and accounted saints, as members of the church; but also sanctified in their hearts and lives, and conformed to the holy image of God. The Apostle sent his Christian salutations to these Christians in Rome, wishing them more

and more of the grace of God, and the peace and consolation which the Gospel only could give them, and which God the Father, by Jesus Christ, his dear Son, bestows on those who truly believe on him, and exercise an humble confidence in him.

NOTE.—We understand, by the words purified, sanctified, and saints, those whose hearts are conformed to the will of God. But we must remember, that these, and such words in the New Testament, especially when applied to Gentiles being admitted to enjoy the privileges of the Christian church, are used in allusion to the sacrifices and washings, which were used under the Jewish law, to purify Gentile proselytes, and make them ritually fit to be received into the Jewish church. When a Gentile had passed through all the rituals of the Jewish law, such as washing his body with water, and offering sacrifices for his purification, he was accounted pure; also when any Jew became ceremonially unclean he had to purify himself by prescribed offerings and washings, before he could be admitted into the congregation of the Lord. By these rites they were purged from their uncleanness, and were then counted pure or sanctified, and were fit to be admitted to the privileges of God's people. Therefore, by an allusion to these rites, and ceremonial cleansings, the Apostles often used the words purified, sanctified, and holy; not meaning the inward holiness of the heart, but being made fit to be admitted to church membership.

Thus the Apostle Peter said, (Acts, xv. 9,) speaking of the Gentiles being admitted to equal privileges with the Jews, "God put no difference between us and them, "purifying their hearts by faith." That is, although these Gentiles were not initiated into the church by all the ritual of sacrifices, and purifications, by Jewish laws,

yet their believing in Christ answered every purpose, and by their faith they were, in the sight of God, counted holy, or clean, and were admitted to equal gifts of the Holy Ghost with us who were circumcised Jews. So also Paul (to the Corinthians, 1 Epis , vii. 14) counted the children of a believer holy, by the parent's faith ; and even the unbelieving wife or husband sanctified by the faith of the believer, so as to be fit to obtain baptism for the children. See also 1 Cor., i. 2, and vi. 11; Eph., i. 1, and ii. 19, and many other such passages.

8. First I thank my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

9. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel, of his son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers.

10. Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God, to come unto you.

After these salutations, the Apostle in the first place expressed his sincere thankfulness to God, offered up through Jesus Christ, as though he was their organ, in rendering up their praise through Jesus, to God their Heavenly Father; because he had blessed the Gospel among them, and had disposed them to believe it, so that their faith was heard of in all places where the glad tidings of the Gospel had reached, throughout the extensive empire of Rome.

And as a testimony of his love to them, and his sincere desire to promote, and rejoice in their spiritual welfare, he called God to witness, even the God whose devoted servant he was, and in the furtherance of whose Gospel by his Son Jesus Christ, his whole soul was engaged, that he constantly remembered them in his prayers before the throne of grace.

The Apostle rejoiced in the spread of the Gospel, by

whatever means it was spread. He had never been at Rome, yet so great was his rejoicing over the church there, that he was very thankful for them, and remembered them daily in his prayers; and so great was his desire to see them that he earnestly prayed that God would grant him a prosperous journey when he would set out on his intended visit to them, on his way to Spain. (Chap. xv. 23, 24–28.) God brought him safe to Rome, it is true, but he had to pass through many scenes of danger and persecution, and a dismal storm at sea, and was at length delivered safe, at Rome, as a prisoner in bonds. God often answers our prayers by fearful works and terrible dispensations. (Psalm lxv. 5.)

11. For I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.

12. That is, that I may be comforted, together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.

It was a great object to have a Christian church well established at Rome. It is well known that Rome at this time, and for many hundred years after, was the capital of the world; it is also a fact that the manners and customs of the capital of any country have great influence over the people in general. To have a well established church in Jerusalem among the Jews was a great matter; also to have churches established in Antioch, Lystra, Galatea and Ephesus; those capital cities in Asia, and in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea, in Macedonia, in Europe, and in Corinth in Greece, was a great furtherance to the Gospel. And now when Jerusalem was soon to be destroyed, it became a great object in the grand scheme of Providence to establish a church in the capital city, Rome. Therefore Paul, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, must be sent to confirm and establish the Gospel in that populous city. It also appears pretty evident,

from the history of the Acts of the Apostles, that none but the Apostles could confer the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. Hence Peter and John were sent to Samaria, after the church at Jerusalem had heard that the Samaritans had received the word by Philip, to confer on the believers there the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Although the Gospel had been preached at Rome, and a church planted there, yet it seems that no Apostle had been there as yet, and consequently, although numbers had received the Gospel, yet it had not been confirmed by the bestowment of miraculous gifts upon them who had believed, like the believers in Samaria, and the twelve disciples at Ephesus. Paul therefore was greatly desirous to go to Rome to pay a visit to the church, in the capital of the Gentile nations, that he might confirm them in the faith of the Gospel, by conferring on them the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost. There was a variety of gifts conferred on the churches. Some were ordinary gifts, which were bestowed without the laying on of the Apostles' hands, and are continued in the church to this day, and which the Roman believers seem to have already received, such as prophecy and ministry, (or preaching the Gospel,) teaching, (or the instruction of the youth in the church,) exhortation, (or a talent for exhorting in their public assemblies,) also a benevolence in charitable contributions, and a capacity for government in the church, and a merciful disposition towards the poor and afflicted. (Rom., xii. 6–8.) These ordinary gifts were bestowed according to the grace of God bestowed on the churches for their edification.

But there were also special and miraculous gifts bestowed generally by the laying on of the Apostles' hands, such as the power to speak with tongues, to work miracles, &c. These miraculous gifts were bestowed for

the confirmation of the Gospel, as a divine testimony that the Apostles were sent of God, and their being able to speak with tongues, and work miracles themselves, and also to communicate the same power to others, had a great tendency to confirm the doctrines they taught as the true doctrines of God. It appears that the Apostles had not power to work what miracles they pleased, nor to work any miracle when they pleased; neither had they power when they pleased to confer spiritual gifts on others. God saw fit to reserve the distribution of his gifts to the direction of his own wisdom. Therefore the Apostle could not be sure what particular gift he might be directed to confer on them at Rome, but he wished to see them, as he was the Apostle of the Gentiles, on the probable presumption "that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift," as God would please to direct for the purpose of establishing the church in the city, Rome, for the furtherance of the Gospel among them, and that they might be confirmed in the faith.

The bestowment of these spiritual gifts tended both to the establishment and consolation of the Apostles themselves, as they were a confirmation of their apostleship, and also the consolation and establishment of the church to whom they were imparted, as they were to them a testimony of the truth of the Gospel which they had embraced, so that the comfort would be mutual between the Apostle and his dear brethren at Rome. The imparting of these spiritual gifts to them would tend to confirm the faith of both the dispenser and the receivers, as it would thereby be made manifest that the Apostle was really vested with the apostolic office among them, and that they had really embraced the truth as it is in Jesus.

13. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

14. I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise.

15. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you, who are at Rome also.

The Apostle let the Romans know that he often purposed to visit them, that he might have some fruit or effect of the Gospel among them, at Rome, as well as among other Gentiles, where he had planted churches and preached the word of God, but that he had hitherto been hindered; either the spirit had forbidden him to go, as yet, as he did when he attempted to go into Proconsular Asia and Bythynia, (Acts, xvi. 6, 7,) or some peculiar circumstances had prevented him.

He acknowledged himself a debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians; that is, he felt himself under the strongest obligations to God, who had graciously called him into the ministry to preach the Gospel to all sorts of people as far as was in his power, so that neither the Romans nor any other people should consider him as coming to them out of a mere compliment, to gratify his own good pleasure or their wishes, because he felt himself under solemn engagements to the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfil his ministry among all the nations, wherever he had the opportunity of extending his labors.

The word Ελλην, a Greek, was often used to distinguish the Gentile nations from the Jews, as in verse 16, and in chap. ii. 9, 10. But here it is evidently used as signifying all the learned Greeks and Romans, as distinguished from the rude and uncultivated part of mankind, who are here called barbarians, and is explained by the Apostle himself in the following words: σοφοις, τε και ανοητοις, which literally means, the learned and the unlearned, or the wise and the ignorant. It was customary with the Greeks and Romans, who considered

themselves a wise and polished people, to call all other nations barbarians. The Apostle adopting this usual mode of expression among the polite Romans, included the whole world, by the phrase Greeks and barbarians, the wise and unwise, and, as he considered himself indebted to all, he professed himself ready and cheerfully willing to preach the Gospel to the citizens of Rome, as well as to any others in other parts of the world.

16. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one who believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Although the Apostle was loaded with reproach for the cause of Christ, and had to wade through trouble and persecution, and had to endure stripes and imprisonments, for the name of Jesus, and although Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, was basely crucified at Jerusalem as a malefactor, and although the professors of the religion of Jesus were stigmatized all over the world both by Jews and Gentiles, yet the Apostle was not ashamed of the Gospel; because it was vindicated and supported by the power of God, which constantly attended his divine word to render it effectual to the salvation of all who believed in Jesus, without respect of persons. This efficacious power attended the Gospel first at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, when thousands were converted to God and for upwards of three years continued to be preached to the Jews only, with great power and effect. And even after the Gospel was given to the Gentiles, the Jews who inhabited Gentile cities were first invited to believe on Jesus, and many became obedient to the faith. But the Gospel was not only attended with divine power among the Jews, but also was attended with the same almighty power when preached to the Gentiles, in turning them

from the worship of idols to the true God, to serve him acceptably, through the Lord Jesus Christ. This glorious Gospel the Apostle gloried in, and was not ashamed to preach it even to the wise and polished citizens of Rome.

17. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written. The just shall live by faith.

For therein is the righteousness of God revealed.—Δικαιοσυνη γαρ Θεϱ, εν αυτω αποκαλυπτεται. This might be rendered: *For the righteousness of God in him*, to wit: in Christ, *is revealed.* This does not mean the essential righteousness of the Deity, consisting in his infinite holiness; but that righteousness which Jesus wrought out as the surety of his people, by which, being imputed to them, they are justified. It is called the righteousness of God, because it was the effect of the infinite wisdom and boundless goodness of the Deity, and wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was really God as well as man. The revelation of this righteousness was made under the new dispensation of the Gospel, *from faith to faith.*

This is thought to be a very difficult phrase, and indeed it is not easy to ascertain what is the precise meaning of the Apostle. Learned commentators have generally thought it to mean as *being wholly by faith*, or as *from one degree of faith to another.* This may be the meaning, but I confess that it is not fully satisfactory. Dr. Doddridge translates the passage thus: "For in it the righteousness of God, by faith, is revealed to our faith." This transposition of the sentence is ingenious; but whether it is strictly correct or not, I cannot say. Some think it means that the righteousness of Christ is revealed by the faithfulness of God, according

to his word and promise, to believers under the Gospel dispensation. This sense makes the word faith, in the first instance, to mean *faithfulness*, as applied to God, and in the other, to mean faith as applied to a believer. Whether the Apostle meant this, is still uncertain.

The author, however, is of opinion that the Apostle meant to show that there was a real connection between the faith of the Saints, under the old Testament dispensation, and of those under the new dispensation of the Gospel. That the same righteousness was revealed under both dispensations, though in a different manner, so that the radical principle of our justification was the same, only by a new and clearer revelation, it, as it were, made a transit from faith to faith, that is, from the way in which the saints, under the law, had to receive the Gospel and the more clear and simple way in which the New Testament believers had to receive it.

Thus the Gospel which the Apostles preached was in fact no new thing, although revealed in a new manner, and believers under the Gospel dispensation enjoyed nothing more than what the saints of old expected the church would enjoy, when the Messiah should come and the faith of believers under the Gospel was, as it were, a new edition of the faith of the old saints, patriarchs and prophets, and the righteousness of Christ, by which both were justified, was revealed in a gradual progression from the Jewish to the Christian church, without any difference, only that the one revelation was clearer than the other, and the Jews looked, through types and prophecies, to the Saviour yet to come, and Christians beheld him as having already come and made a full atonement for sin.

This seems to the author to be the most satisfactory idea we can take from this uncommon phrase, and is the

same as if the Apostle should have said, therein is the righteousness of God revealed from the one dispensation to the other. This interpretation seems to be supported by the Apostle's quoting a text in Habakkuk, ii. 4, proving that those who were accounted just under the old Testament dispensation, were justified and obtained everlasting life, *by faith*, as well as those under the dispensation of the Gospel.

18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

The Apostle having now stated the grand subject on which he was about to write, to wit: the justification of a sinner only through the righteousness of Christ, by faith, proceeded immediately to explain and demonstrate the truth of his proposition. The first ground he takes is to show that all mankind, by sin, are liable to the wrath of God; which awfully solemn truth he hath not only revealed to the Jews by the writings of Moses and the Prophets, but also even the Gentiles might have the knowledge of it by tradition from their forefathers, and also by the frequent dispensations of God's providence, in his terrible judgments upon the wicked, and indeed it is a fact that mankind in general, both Jews and Heathens, as well as Christians, have ever been impressed with the idea that the Deity is angry with the wicked, and will punish those who sin against him. The Apostle gives this general description of the wicked, that they are they των την αληθειαν εν αδικια κατεχοντων, translated improperly, *who hold the truth in unrighteousness;* but the proper sense is, who hinder, restrain or oppose the truth by unrighteousness, the wicked Jews through their wicked propensities and practices, oppose the truths of God and are inattentive

to his laws; and the perverse heathen, through their wickedness, oppose the light of their own consciences, and refuse to attend to the dictates of reason and foolishly worship dumb idols instead of the true God.

19. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them.

20. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

These two verses would be more intelligible, and the construction would be more agreeable to the idiom of the English language, if they were translated as follows:

Because that which is known of God, even his eternal power and divine majesty, is evident among them; for God has manifested it unto them; for these invisible things of him, being understood from the creation of the world, are clearly seen by the things which are made; so that they have no apology *for their wickedness*.

It is natural and agreeable to our sympathetic feelings to pity the poor heathen who live destitute of the Gospel. But let us fear, lest, while we rejoice in our superior privileges, we misimprove them to our greater condemnation. Although the Gentile world were left of God in a dismal state of ignorance, for the want of divine revelation, yet the Apostle here shows that they are inexcusable in their wickedness. Because by the right exercise of their reason they might have known God in a much higher degree than they did. The works of creation was a constant revelation to them from age to age; by which the almighty power of the great Creator of all things, and his divine majesty and awful sovereignty were constantly declared before their eyes,

so that if any man would employ his rational powers in search of truth, by tracing the infallible testimony of the whole creation addressed to his reason, he must arrive at the knowledge of the true God, as the boundless and uncreated source of all life and perfection. So that the heathen are inexcusable even for their ignorance of the true God. Moreover it is evident that the generality of the heathen, especially those of them who were enlightened, in some degree, by the remains of tradition, and their improvements in philosophy, as the Greeks and Romans were, had a much better notion of their duty and obligations to God, than they practiced; and when any person acts contrary to what he knows to be his duty, he can have no good apology for his criminality. Thus it appears that although the heathen could not attain to the knowledge of the method of salvation, through Jesus Christ, without the Holy Scriptures, yet as they had by natural reason a degree of knowledge as to the duties of morality, they were justly charged with sin in acting contrary to that knowledge which they had, or might have had of God, and their obligations to him as their Creator.

21. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God; neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened.

22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.

23. And changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.

The drift of the Apostle is here to show, that the heathen, even in their most enlightened state, and under the direction of their wisest laws, and the influence of their greatest philosophers, were all condemned as guilty before God; and imagination could hardly paint a more

wretched and pitiable condition than is described in these verses.

It is well known that the Greeks and Romans, as well as the generality of the Gentile nations, acknowledged one supreme Deity, whom they worshipped as the King of the Gods. Among the Greeks he was called Zeus, and among the Romans he was called Jupiter. But they also worshipped a great number of inferior deities, under different names, and as presiding over different countries, and as having the rule over different elements, &c. It appears that through the help of tradition and the light of reason, they were disposed to acknowledge one Supreme Being; but as the Apostle says, when they knew God they did not give that glory to him which was due, and did not render gratitude and love to him only as their Creator and Preserver, but through the vanity of their minds, running after their own foolish and empty imaginations and reasonings, they acknowledged and worshipped their gods by thousands, giving glory and honor to their imaginary deities, which were due to the Supreme Jehovah only; and so their ignorant minds were more and more beclouded by their vain philosophy, and the empty adoration which they paid to their idols.

It is not improbable but this clause Διοτι γνοντες τον Θεον, ουκ ως Θεον εδοξασαν η ευχαριστησαν, should be rendered: Because, they having known God, did not glorify him, nor were thankful *to him* as the *only true* God.

Thus the philosophers of Rome and Greece, vaunting themselves in the high sounding titles of σοφοι, *sages* or *wise men*, were deluded by their pretended wisdom, and thereby became, μωροι, destitute of all true and rational knowledge. (See I Cor., i. 17–29.)

Instead of rendering due honor and gratitude to God, as the only living and true God, they changed, or trans-

ferred, the glory of the incorruptible and immortal God, unto mere images, fabricated in the shape of perishing mortals; and as if this was not a sufficient degradation of the divine glory, they worshipped the images of birds and of four-footed beasts, yea, even of the very serpents, who are condemned to creep on their bellies on the surface of the ground. This is truly a striking view of the state of the heathen; and we are the more astonished at their unspeakable folly and prostitution of common sense, when we consider that this was not merely the practice of the rude and barbarous nations of the earth, or of individuals who were untaught and duped and immersed in ignorance, but this surprising description answers to none better than the wise and refined citizens of Egypt, Babylon, Athens, and Rome, where learning and philosophy flourished in the highest degree.

The worship of idols and of images first begins with a great pretence of very high reverence to the true God. It is pretended that the Deity is too great to admit of the approach of such unworthy creatures into his awful presence. Thus Satan, by his art and wicked devices, tempts mankind to imagine that they need mediators to stand between them and God, and therefore the sun, moon and planets, and the departed ghosts of good men and of heroes, and even the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, &c., have been employed as mediators, until mankind have been drawn off entirely from the worship of the true God.

It is lamentable to think how the church of Rome have gradually been drawn into this fatal snare of the devil. Not contented with the glorious mediator which God has appointed, they, under the pretence of quickening their devotion, first introduced festivals, and then images of Christ, the cross, of angels, and of saints, to

engage their hearts in devotion, &c. They soon began to pray to the Virgin Mary, and to the ghosts of departed saints. Thus they gradually went on, until their worship became a mere round of devotion to images, to the relics of their saints, bowing to old rotten bones and pieces of wood, and what not; and the Apostle's description of the doleful state of old Pagan Rome is not improperly applied to Papal Rome. Even our twenty-fifth day of December, called Christmas, was first appointed by the canons of the Romish church, to be a sacred commemoration of the birth of our dear Redeemer, and was at first celebrated with great devotion and solemn exercises of religion. At length it degenerated into a common festival, and was spent in jovial mirth, but now it is by many professors of religion entirely devoted to the service of the devil. Thus Satan ensnares mankind, and draws them on to dishonor God and Jesus Christ, and to engage in the service of himself, while at first he pretends to further them in the exercises of religious worship.

24. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.

25. Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature, more than (παρα instead of) the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

God was so far from winking at, or excusing the blinded abominations of the heathens, (according to the unguarded explanations of some commentators, given of Acts, xvii. 30,) that he was very highly offended at them for their abominable idolatries, and in a judicial manner gave them up, by withdrawing his restraining grace from them, and leaving them to the vicious gratification of the unclean lusts of their own hearts; that as they

had dishonored the rational faculties of their minds, by the senseless worship of idols, so they might dishonor their bodies among themselves, by their abominable lascivious practices with one another.

This awful judgment was inflicted upon these wicked idolators because they, in their pretence to wisdom and philosophy, contrary to all reason and common sense, perverted the truth, or the true worship of God, which reason and true philosophy would have dictated, and cultivated the worship of dumb idols in its place, which is frequently in Scripture called vanity and lies. (See Jer., x. 14, 15, and xvi. 19; Amos, ii. 4; Jonah, ii. 8; Habak., ii. 18.) This sacrilegious worship was very dishonoring to that glorious God, who is the great creator of heaven and earth, and who only is worthy of the highest reverence from angels and men, forever more.

26. For this cause God gave them up to vile affections; for even their women did change their natural use into that which is against nature.

27. And likewise also the men leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient.

These base and unnatural practices, which were customary among the heathen, described by the Apostle in language as delicate and modest as the nature of those obscene crimes could possibly admit of, plainly show in what a shocking state the heathen were left by God, as given up to the dominion of Satan and their own unbridled lusts. Even their women, whom decency required to observe the strictest modesty, were not satisfied with the natural embraces of the other sex, but burning

with vile propensities, vainly attempted to gratify their lusts in the embraces of one another. Also their men, not contented with the natural embraces of the female sex, were inflamed with base propensities towards each other, even males with males, indulging in the vile sin of Sodomy, practicing deeds too obscene to be mentioned, and too detestable to be thought of, but with abhorrence. Thus God was pleased to leave them to judicial blindness and wickedness, that they might receive a reward of ignominy suitable to their ignominious conduct. Because they had not studied to retain the knowledge of the true God, therefore God gave them up to a blinded mind (αδοκιμον νσν) and suffered them to indulge in things (μη κα-Θηκοντα) which are unsuitable and inconsistent with decency and propriety.

It is well known that these abominable practices were not only common among the lower classes of the Gentiles, but also among the most polite and learned philosophers both of Greece and Rome, and even some of their most eminent poets have celebrated the vilest of these abominations with pleasure and approbation.

29. Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers.

30. Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents.

31. Without understanding, covenant breakers; without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful.

After the Apostle had mentioned those unnatural abominations which abounded among the Gentiles, he proceeded to an enumeration of a group of criminal practices which reigned among them, and rendered them highly criminal in the sight of God. Twenty-two species of crimes are here enumerated:

1. Fornication, πορνεια, or criminal conversation between the sexes.

2. Wickedness, πονηρια, or mischievous practices.

3. Covetousness, πλεονεξια, or avaricious thirst for more.

4. Maliciousness, κακια, a disposition to do injuries.

5. Full of envy, μεστους φθονου.

6. Murder, φονου. The Greeks and Romans were murderers in many ways. Their envious, spiteful principles, illy regulated by very imperfect morals, induced them often to commit murder by open violence, and very often secretly by poison. They were addicted to suicide. They often destroyed their weakly infants and their aged, decrepid parents. The dismal slaughter which took place by their extensive and cruel wars, carried on for the sake of victory, dominion, and the mere pride of conquest. Their games and public shows exhibited thousands of instances in which their gladiators, and those who fought with fists and clubs, were massacred before the eyes of vast crowds of spectators, both men and women, who thronged these public places, merely for pastime and entertainment. It was also a very customary thing in those times of public entertainment, to cast slaves and prisoners to be devoured by wild beasts, for the amusement of the spectators.

7. Debate, ερῖδος, strife or contention.

8. Deceit, δολου, fraud or cheatery.

9. Malignity, κακοηθειας, a habit of doing evil; a bad custom or practice.

10. Whisperers, ψιθυριστας, those who secretly spread malicious tales as secrets to the injury of others.

11. Backbiters, καταλαλους, those who contradict those with whom they are talking; also those who use bad, insulting language, or speak maliciously or injuriously against any other person.

12. Haters of God. Θεοστυγεις.

13. Despiteful, υβριστας, outrageous, obstinate, and injurious.

14. Proud, υπερηφανους, ostentatious.

15. Boasters, αλαζονας.

16. Inventors of evil things, εφευρετας κακων, those who take pride in hatching up mischievous tricks by which they are entertained with the evil they can contrive to work on others.

17. Disobedient to parents, γονευσιν απειθεις.

18. Without understanding, ασυνετους, that is, acting contrary to good sense and reason.

19. Covenant breakers, ασυνθετους, those who act contrary to their contracts, or break the peace.

20. Without natural affection, αστορνους, those who disregard the natural relation which subsists between parents and children. Their most inhuman practice of destroying their sickly and infirm infants, and all those whom they did not wish to have the trouble of nursing and bringing up; and also the cruel and barbarous practice of children's killing their old decrepid and helpless parents, were most flagrant and shameful instances of this detestable crime of being without natural affection.

21. Implacable, ασπονδους, vicious ill-disposed persons, given to quarrelling and not easily pacified.

22. Unmerciful, ανελεημονας, untender, without pity or compassion.

32. Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them who do them.

These poor, unhappy heathen, although they were destitute of the light of the Gospel, yet they had knowledge enough to know that God had forbidden these enormities, and that those who indulged in them would

finally fall under his displeasure, and be condemned to pain and misery; yet, they not only allowed themselves individually to live in these unrighteous practices, but were even so far depraved as to take pleasure in those who committed such acts of wickedness. When a man commits sin himself, it shows that he is wicked; but, as Dr. Whitby pertinently observes, he who can take pleasure in others committing sin, demonstrates the highest degree of depravity and a predominant relish for iniquity.

Here the Apostle concludes the first part of his argument, to wit: that the Gentiles were in an awful state of guilt, and consequently there could be no ground for them to hope for justification on account of their own righteousness. It is also a doleful consideration, that while we read over the dismal catalogue of crimes with which the Apostle has charged the heathen world, we have to lament that too many of those glaring enormities are practiced in christian countries, and even by professors of religion. If, therefore, poor ignorant heathen are so highly criminal in the sight of God for the perpetration of such crimes, what must the ungodly professor of religion expect to suffer who enjoys the divine light of revelation, and sins against all the teachings and warnings contained in the Word of God? Let hardened sinners fear and tremble.

LECTURE II.

ROMANS II, 1-24.

Verse 1. Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art who judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself, for thou who judgest doest the same things.

2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them who commit such things.

3. And thinkest thou this, O man, who judgest them who do such things and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God.

The Apostle now enters upon another branch of his demonstration. His great object was, as has already been observed in chapter i. 18, to show that none of the race of Adam, whether Jew or Gentile, could be justified by their own works, but that their justification could be obtained only through Christ by faith. In the first chapter he had proved by well known facts, which actually existed among the Gentiles, that they were in a criminal state and lying under the guilt of sin, and consequently that they were in a state of condemnation. He is now about to show that the Jews, notwithstanding their superior light, were also in a state of guilt, as they came far short of perfect obedience to the most perfect and holy law of God.

He very modestly and ingeniously introduced this part of his argument, by a solemn appeal to the common sense of all those who professed to have knowledge

enough to determine, as judges, the criminality of those who were guilty of such evil practices as he had enumerated; who, nevertheless, were guilty of the very same practices, or at least of practices equally criminal. This address was indeed calculated to take in the wise philosophers among the heathen, who, though guilty of many sins themselves, were great censurers of others, whom they considered more guilty than they. But the Jews were particularly struck at who considered themselves as the highly favored people of God, and were disposed to look upon the Gentiles as base and unclean. But it is very evident, not only from the account given of them in the Scriptures, which the Apostle quotes by and by, but also from the account of Josephus, their own historian, that while they thought highly of themselves, as the descendants of Abraham and the disciples of Moses, and condemned all the nations around them as wicked and ungodly, they themselves were guilty of practices as bad as the Gentiles, and that their crimes were far more aggravating to God, because of the superior opportunities which they enjoyed. It is an evident dictate of common sense that he who condemns another for a crime of which he himself is also guilty, condemns himself. And however partial we may be in our own favor, while we criminate others, we may be sure that God will judge us all with an impartial judgment, and none need expect to escape condemnation, whether Jew or Gentile, who break his commandments, let our judgment of ourselves and of one another be as it may.

4. Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

God had dealt with the Jewish nation both in judgments and mercies; he had counselled and warned them

by his prophets, and had, with great tenderness and forbearance, waited with them and borne with their frowardness and frequent rebellions. He had, at length, sent his Son to redeem them, and after they had crucified him, he gave them the first offer of his mercy and still continued to call and invite them to accept of the grace of the Gospel. But it is the unhappy case with sinners that when they find that God is long suffering and abundant in his goodness and forbearance, and does not inflict his wrath suddenly upon them, they grow more rebellious and daringly wicked, and impose on the patience of God, and presumptuously disregard his threatenings and flatter themselves that through his abundant mercy they will finally escape his vengeance. Thus they never consider that every instance of God's forbearance ought to be a powerful argument to press them to a cordial acceptance of the Gospel, and a timous surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

6. Who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Careless and procrastinating sinners, by venturing upon the patience of God, harden their hearts; so that by their obstinately persisting on in the ways of sin, and suffering no change of sentiment in their hearts, they neglect the Gospel, and thus they treasure up and accumulate more and more guilt, which will finally call for more vengeance to be poured out upon them, when these long abused days of forbearance shall come to a close, and when the merciful Lamb of God shall put on his robes of justice, and, as an enraged lion, will roar, and leap upon his prey. Sinners will find to their shame and confusion that God hath appointed a day in

which he will judge the world in righteousness, and give a full display of his righteous distribution of rewards and punishments, to every man respectively, according as he has done while here upon earth.

7. To them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, eternal life.

8. But unto them who are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.

9. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man who doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

These verses, with a small variation, would read more intelligibly translated thus :

7. *He will give* eternal life unto those who, through perseverance in good works, seek glory, honor and immortality.

8. But indignation and wrath to those who, through contention, are disobedient to the truth ; but are obedient to unrighteousness.

9. *Yea*, tribulation and anguish *shall fall* upon every soul of man who persists in doing evil, of the Jew especially, and also of the Gentile.

At the day of judgment, Jesus Christ, the glorious Judge, will award everlasting life and eternal happiness and glory to all those who, in the exercise of patience, persevere in their attachment to the Gospel, and by a holy obedience to the will of God, seek to obtain glory and honor, and an immortal crown of rejoicing, which God has been pleased to promise as a gracious reward for the poor, imperfect services of his people here below.

But, on the other hand, he will pour out his indignation and vengeance upon those who have stood out against the Gospel, by idle and unprofitable disputes, and contentious and speculative theories which serve

only to hold the heart from Christ and keep it under the power and dominion of sin.

Upon the whole, let what will be the cause of a man's continuing in the ways of iniquity, and let him be of what sect or party he may, unspeakable distress and painful imprisonment (στενοχωρια) shall surely be his final portion at the last day, and those who have enjoyed the greatest opportunities of the Gospel, and have misimproved them, must expect to suffer the highest degree of punishment for the inexcusable crime of rejecting the calls of the Gospel. Neither will the most rude and uncultivated savage escape condemnation, although the small degree of light he had, will greatly mitigate his punishment. If the Jews, living under the dark dispensation of types and shadows, had to suffer greater punishment than the benighted heathen, of how much severer punishment must we be worthy, who live under the clear light of the Son of Righteousness, if we neglect the great salvation which is offered to us in the Gospel.

10. But glory, honor and peace, to every man who worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.

11. For there is no respect of persons with God.

But on the other hand, God will confer upon those who do that which is good; that is, to those who comply with the requisitions of the Gospel, not only eternal life, through the atonement of the cross, but also a gracious reward of glory, honor and divine consolation, for all they have done or suffered in this world for his name. Those who have enjoyed the greatest opportunities, and have improved them, will obtain the greatest reward; and their reward, who have enjoyed but scanty advantages of the Gospel, will be in proportion to the improvements

they have made of the opportunities granted them. He who improves two talents, will obtain a blessed reward, but his reward will not be equal to his who has improved five talents.

God is no respector of persons. That is, he makes no difference as to birth, lineal descent, as to high, low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, bond or free, Jew or Gentile; but the great and only distinction which he makes among mankind is, the believer and the unbeliever, the righteous and the wicked. Let any person be of what nation, language, parentage, climate, color, cultivation, sect or profession he may, if he be a believer in Christ, he shall be saved; and he shall be rewarded for all the good and for all the honor he has done to the cause of Christ, according to his works; but if he reject the Gospel, he shall be damned, and his punishment shall be according to the opportunities he has neglected, and the evil he has done to the cause of religion.

12. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in (or against) the law, shall be judged by the law.

16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.

By the law here, the Apostle means the revealed will of God, whether contained in the moral law, or the whole of the rules and prescriptions contained in the Old Testament, and it will also extend to the more clear revelation of his will, by the Gospel of his Son. And the sense is, that every one will be judged at the last day according to the opportunities he has enjoyed; and the condemnation of the wicked shall be according to the opportunity they respectively had of knowing their duty. Those who shall have sinned in the dark regions of heathenism, without the direct knowledge of the will of God

by divine revelation, should be punished, or sentenced to perdition, (απολουνται) not because they have transgressed the written laws of God, as they had not enjoyed the benefit or privilege of those laws, but because they have sinned against the light of reason, and wilfully acted contrary to the rational knowledge which they had of right and wrong, duty and sin. But those who have lived under the light of revelation, and have had the opportunity of being taught by the unerring oracles of God, as was the case with the Jews, and as is the case with us christians, and yet have sinned, (εν νομω) against the law, (as it ought to be rendered,) and thus transgressed against the revealed will of God, they must be judged according to the laws which they have broken, and their punishment awarded accordingly.

Jesus Christ will be the judge at the last day. This honor the Father has given him, to judge even the secrets of men, and decide on their respective cases, in his mediatorial character as God and man; and no heart can possibly conceive of the infinite glory and the boundless grandeur in which our crucified Redeemer will appear on that triumphant and tremendous day, when the whole universe of intelligent creatures will be summoned before him, to await their final sentence, from which there can be no appeal. The Apostle also says that mankind shall be judged according to the Gospel which he preached. His meaning is not that the Gospel will be the rule by which all men, both Jews and Gentiles, will be judged; but that all will be judged on the principles he was then explaining and declaring to them; and that the day of judgment would most assuredly come as the Gospel declared it would, and that the process and the issue would be according as Christ and his Apostles had taught, and as he himself preached.

13. For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law are justified.

The Jews imagined that because they were the descendants of Abraham they should assuredly be saved. This, probably, was not the opinion of every individual, but it is very evident that it was the general sentiment of their rabbies. See John, v. 39, 45, and viii. 33, 39, 41, and ix. 34, 40, 41; Luke, xv. 19 and xviii. 9–12. Dr. Whitby has collected a number of very remarkable sayings from the writings of the Jewish rabbies, which give a very striking view of the high opinions the Jews entertained of themselves as the peculiar people of God.

"Hell hath no power over sinners of Israel; because Abraham and Isaac descend thither to fetch them thence.—No circumcised person goes to hell, God having promised to deliver them from it for the merit of circumcision.—All Israelites have their portion in the world to come; and that notwithstanding their sins, yea, though they were condemned here for their wickedness.—He who hath his seat in the land of Israel, and eateth his common food in cleanliness, and speaks the holy language, and recites his phylacteries morning and evening, let him be confident that he shall obtain the life of the world to come."

We cannot but pity while we read such absurd notions; and as pride and self-righteousness peculiarly oppose the Gospel, it seems no wonder that it had but little success in Judea. But the Apostle here declares that to have the privilege of attending to the law and ordinances of God is not sufficient to justify any man in the sight of God; but in order to our obtaining a perfect righteousness, on legal principles, sufficient for our justification, it is necessary that we perfectly keep the law, by rendering, both in heart and life, a perfect obedience to its precepts.

It must be evident to any candid mind that the Apostle does not intend to admit the possibility of justification by obedience to the moral law, for this would be directly contrary to the very point he was endeavoring to prove, to wit, that justification is only through the righteousness of Christ, imputed by faith. He is now showing that on the supposition that our justification were by our own righteousness, yet even on that ground it would be absurd to suppose that the bare hearing of the law could justify us, but it would be necessary that we should be perfectly obedient to its precepts. The Jews enjoyed great advantages in having the oracles of God, but they were not thereby justified, because they did not keep the law, so that they were no nearer justification by their having the written law than the Gentiles were, who had no revealed rule to go by.

14. For when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

On the principles of moral justice, no governor could require obedience any farther than he saw fit to make his laws known to his subjects; and if he promulgated no law, there could be no transgression, and all must be justified on the footing of perfect innocence—as Adam was, before the law of his Maker was made known to him—and all the obedience that can be necessary to justification, on a legal score, (which is the ground on which the Apostle is now arguing) must be perfectly to fulfill the law, as far as it is revealed; for nothing can be more absurd than to require obedience to an unrevealed rule, which cannot be known. Therefore it is plain, as the Apostle argues, that, although the Jews looked down upon the Gentiles, as beneath their notice, and as sunk in sin and depravity, yet they had as fair a

chance for justification as the greatest rabbies in the Jewish nation had, if justification were on the footing of legal obedience; for they had as much obedience when compared with their degree of knowledge of the divine will, as the Jews had, when their obedience was compared with their superior degree of knowledge. It required a thousand degrees more of righteousness to justify a Jew than a Gentile, because the Jew had a thousand degrees more light, if justification were by the law. But when we consider that one sin of a Jew against his light would outweigh a thousand sins of a Gentile in heathenish darkness, we find, on fair legal principles, that the Gentiles stood a better chance for justification than the Jews did; especially when we find, as we will presently, on the Apostle's argument (verse 24 and chap. iii. 9–19,) that the Jews were the greatest sinners.

But still it is evident that the Gentiles were far from justification, for they were not without a law, although they had not the written law. For they, by the exercise of natural reason, discovered so much of their duty, as served to be a law among themselves, and by rational arguments they prescribed rules of morality to themselves, which they believed to be right. And although the Apostle on just grounds charged them with great sin for not exercising their rational powers as they might have done, in discovering the truth, and thus holding back the truth by unrighteousness, and not retaining the knowledge of God (chap. i. 18, 28,) yet still they had so much light as bound them to obey the Deity as far as they knew of him. Thus the moral law had a binding power on them in a certain degree, although they had not the written law.

15. Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.

The Gentiles discovering, by the proper exercise of reason, their duty and obligations to obedience to God, showed that they had the idea of moral obligation, as it were, written on their hearts; that is, they had a sense of duty impressed upon their minds, a consciousness of obligation within them, not innately or by creation, but begotten in them by the exercise of reason and observation, assisted by the relics of tradition, and the glimpses that their public teachers had of revelation, as Egypt, Babylon, Greece and Rome were all acquainted, and, in some degree, conversant with the Jews. This they evidently showed, by a conscientious approbation or crimination, both as to their own conduct and the conduct of others, according as their dispositions or practices accorded or discorded with their notions of right and wrong.

All this proves that the heathen had a law, although not the written law of God, and also that they transgressed it, and felt themselves guilty before God; and were far from having any claim to justification, by virtue of perfect obedience to what, with their imperfect degree of light, they knew to be their duty.

Those who have read the admirable philosophical writings of Seneca, Cicero, and other heathen moralists, as also the many fine moral rules and precepts laid down by their celebrated poets, which are admired even by Christians themselves, must be convinced that the Apostle had good grounds for this part of his argument. But what good did all this do in point of justification? Truly none, because neither Jews nor Gentiles have kept

the law; and it effectually proves that all are in a state of guilt, and under condemnation, and that nothing but the great atonement of the Cross can save a guilty world. But the Apostle is not yet done with the Jews; their pride and arrogance must be pulled down, and they must be convinced that their high toned righteousness, their relation to the patriarchs, and their boasted descent from Abraham, would serve them in no stead, in point of justification.

17. Behold thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God.

18. And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law.

The Apostle was well acquainted with the manners and customs of the Jews, as well as with the opinions and customs of the Gentiles. A more pointed and pertinent address to the high toned opinions of the learned Pharisees can hardly be conceived, and yet managed with fine address and in a polite and handsome manner.

Thou art called a Jew. The Jews thought it a very great honor to be of the stock of Israel, the peculiar people of God; and indeed, this privilege would have been the greatest honor that could be conferred upon them, had they acted in a consistency with their high calling. But to glory in the empty name of a Jew, while they acted contrary to the will of that glorious God, who had chosen them to be his covenanted people, was perfectly inconsistent and contemptible.

And restest in the law. The Jews indulged a firm confidence in the favor of God, because he had given them his statutes and ordinances; and they placed their hope of his favor on their strict attention to the outward ceremonies of their ritual; even while they were inattentive to the divine precepts of morality. And

in this carnal security, they *made their boast of God*, as their God; arrogating an exclusive right to his favor, as his only people. They, therefore, set themselves up as judges in matters of religion, as a people who had *a perfect knowledge of the will of God*, as they had his written records to guide them, and were not left to the imperfect dictates of human reason. They therefore considered themselves as comptetent judges (δοκιμαζεις) to determine all controversies (διαφερουτα) or different opinions in theology, *as they were instructed out of the law* of God, and had a most perfect rule, by which they could determine with certainty, what was right and what was wrong. All these advantages, indeed, they had, and it was a great pity they had not made a good use of them.

19. And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness.

20. An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law.

The Jews, in consequence of their superior advantages, were accustomed to give the diminutive epithets, *blind, ignorant, foolish, babes*, &c., to the Gentiles, and they considered themselves quite their superiors in point of the knowledge of the divine will; and consequently fully capable of being competent guides and instructors of the ignorant Pagans around them. And this was certainly true, in consequence of their being possessed of the oracles of God, and having a divinely authenticated *copy of the law* to guide them into the perfect *knowledge of the truth*, according to the *perfect will of God.*

These superior advantages of the Jews are stated by the Apostle with great ingenuity, and in beautiful order

and in proper place; so that his deductions on these grounds come forward with irresistible force.

21. Thou, therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou who preaches, a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

22. Thou who sayest, a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

23. Thou who makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God?

These solemn interrogatories bring home the Apostle's argument with every advantage. It was truly ridiculous for the Jews to set themselves up as teachers of moral rectitude; professing to have the divine law as their infallible guide, and yet in their own conduct to trample upon those very laws which they held up to others, as the only guide to duty. It appears, both from the account of Scripture and profane history, that the Jews, and even the priests, and scribes, and elders, were scandalously guilty of all the crimes which are stated by the Apostle. They were so shamefully ignorant of the true meaning of the law of God, although they pretended to be great lawyers, scribes, and doctors, that our Saviour often charged them with the most groveling ignorance. He called them blind guides, blind leaders of the blind; teaching the commandments of men for the doctrines of the law of God, and making void the law, through their traditions; and he gives several instances of the false constructions which these boasting teachers put on the divine law, which the reader may consult to great advantage in Matt., xii. 2–12, and xv. 1–9, 14; and xix. 3–9; and xxii. 23–46; and xxiii. 13–33. Mark, vii. 1–13. Luke, v. 30–39; and x. 25–37, compared with John, iv. 9. John, iii. 4, 9, 10; and v. 16, and vii. 21–24; and viii. 33–44.

Dr. Scott quotes several passages out of the Talmud, and other Jewish writings, which show the shocking ignorance and absurdity which rendered the doctrines taught by these rabbies, despicable and ridiculous. "Whosoever despiseth the washing of hands is worthy to be excommunicated. He who eats bread with unwashen hands, does as bad as if he committed whoredom. The religious of old did eat their common food in cleanness, and this is a matter of the highest sanctity, and the way of the highest religion. It is better to die than to transgress the tradition of the elders. The words of the scribes are lovely, above the words of the law, and more weighty than the words of the law, or of the prophets. If a man can say to his parents, when they need any relief, I have bound myself with an oath (or vow) that I will not do anything for my father and mother, he is under no obligation to give to his father. A father being in want, requires relief of his son; the son answers, that he hath vowed that he will not; so that it remains to him not lawful to relieve him. And the Pharisees approve this practice. A man may be so bound by his vows, that he cannot, without great sin, do what God had required by his laws to be done; so that if he made a vow which laid him under a necessity to violate God's law, his vow must stand and the law be abrogated. If a man see a woman whom he loves better than his wife, let him divorce his wife and marry her. Thou shalt hate thine enemy. Hell hath no power over sinners of Israel; because Abraham and Isaac descend thither and fetched them out. No circumcised person goes to hell."

The above selection of the doctrines taught by the Jewish rabbies, abundantly proves them to be blind guides indeed, and justifies the pertinent question of the

Apostle: "Thou who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" These teachers also acted contrary to the laws which they prescribed to others.

Thou who proclaimeth (κηρυσσων) *a man should not steal, dost thou steal?* Christ charged the scribes and Pharisees with the cruel sin of "devouring widows' houses;" that is, of artfully defrauding the helpless widows and orphans of their substance; and the high priests, as Josephus says, were guilty of defrauding the under priests and Levites of their lawful share of support at the temple, so that some even perished for lack of food. They tolerated traders in the outer courts of the temple, who, by their illicit traffic, made the temple a den of thieves instead of a house of prayer.

Dost thou commit adultery? When the Pharisees set the adulterous woman before Jesus he commanded him who was without sin to cast the first stone. This convicted them of their own guiltiness, and they all went out. Although this does not prove that they were every one guilty of adulterous practices, yet it leaves but little doubt that too many of them were, and Dr. Whitby, in his remarks on verse 7th, has shown that adultery was very prevalent among the Jews at that time.

Dost thou commit sacrilege, ἱεροσυλεις, means the application of sacred things to common or profane use, the using of things dedicated to God as common, robbing the church, &c. The Jews used to be very prone to idolatry; but after the Babylonish captivity they were very careful not to return to that particular sin. But they were very guilty of sacrilege. They robbed the temple of that spiritual worship which was due to God in it, and converted the solemn rites on which they attended in that sacred place to a mere round of external forms. Malachi, the prophet, complained heavily of

their robbery and profanation of the holy temple of the Lord. They profaned his table, they offered polluted bread, and the lame, the blind and the sick; they robbed God in withholding their tithes and offerings. The chief priests also took the sacred offerings, and converted them unto their own use, to enrich their coffers, while they robbed the under priests of their daily support. They profaned the outer courts of the temple by admitting merchants, money changers, and sellers of doves to occupy the sacred porches of the Lord's house.

By breaking the law dishonorest thou God?

Notwithstanding all the pretended sanctity of the Pharisees, their alms, fasts, and long prayers, they were as whited walls, and as beautiful sepulchres, full of dead men's bones, and rottenness; full of envy, pride, hypocrisy, oppression, covetousness, fraud and violence, which gave abundant room for the pointed charge of our Lord, (John, vii. 19:) "Did not Moses give you the law? and yet none of you keepeth the law;" and Stephen with his dying breath told them that they had, by the disposition of angels, received the law, but had not kept it. Christ called them a wicked and adulterous generation, and told them that they were of their father, the devil, and the works of their father they would do; and with awful emphasis said to them, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

24. For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Such was the wicked conduct of the Jews that their crimes were even noticed by the pagan nations around them. And as they professed to be worshippers of Jehovah, the God of Israel, his sacred and awful name, and his sacred institutions, were evil spoken of and

reviled by the Gentiles, and their holy religion was brought into contempt and ridicule by their notorious enormities. Thus the Jews still gave ground for complaint, as had been generally the case with the nation from ancient times, as is evident from the written records in the Holy Scriptures. See II. Sam., xii. 14, Jam., ii. 15, 16, Ezek., xxxvi. 20–23. Josephus has a remarkable passage very pertinent to the point in hand, and is such a literal confirmation of the truth of what the Apostle has here stated, that one is ready to conclude that he had transcribed it from these verses, (which, by the by, is not impossible.)

This celebrated historian frequently accused the Jews, saying, "What wickedness do you conceal and hide which is not known to your enemies? You triumph in your wickedness, strive daily who shall be most vile, making a show of your wickedness as if it were virtue. And thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape he judgment of God, who punisheth the Gentiles, when thou art as guilty as they of acting against thy own conscience, and doing that for which thy own mouth condemns thee, and which doth also cause them to blaspheme that holy name by which thou art called?"

When this was the character of the Jews, who enjoyed the advantages of the written law and ordinances of God, how could they, any more than the Gentiles, expect to be justified by the deeds of the law? All the difference for the better, between them and the Gentiles, was merely that they had the oracles of God, and the Gentiles had nothing but the exertions of their own reason to guide them.

LECTURE III.

ROMANS II. 25—29, AND III. 1—20.

Verse 25. Now, circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

The author has taken the liberty to insert the word now, in the beginning of this verse, instead of the causal conjunction, *for*. The Greek word, γαρ, is literally used to connect what follows it, with what precedes it, when what follows is given as a reason, or argument for what was said before; and consequently, in all such cases, it has the meaning of the English word *for* or *because*. But it is used here without any such connection, as the Apostle is now entering upon a quite different subject, having finished the former part of his demonstration, and consequently, γαρ, is here used as an adverb or an expletive particle, answering to the English particle, *Now*. For this, I have also the authority of Dr. Doddridge who was a very accurate writer in the Greek. "It is most evident," says he, "that, γαρ, cannot here signify, that the following words are a reason for what was asserted in those immediately preceding. It seems little more than an expletive, as the particle *now* among us often is."

This verse ought to begin the third chapter; because it is evident, that the 24th verse closes the Apostle's arguments, on the supposition that justification was by perfect obedience to the moral law; he having clearly

demonstrated, that on that plan, neither the Gentiles nor the Jews would stand the test, as they were both guilty of transgressing the law of God; the Gentiles the law of nature, as it is called; and the Jews the written law given by revelation, and to this demonstration he evidently alludes in the 9th verse of the next chapter.

The Jews thought that circumcision was essential to salvation, and that if a man be circumcised, and especially if he were a natural descendant of Abraham, he would assuredly be saved. They considered circumcision as the seal of God's covenant, and that it insured the blessings of the covenant to every one who was the subject of it, except he would apostatize, or were excommunicated. They also thought that their being Abraham's seed, and having Abraham for their father, excused their immoralities, if they only attended closely to the external rites of Moses, and punctually observed the tradition of the elders. To this absurd opinion the Apostle now turns the attention of the Jews, and argues the proper use of circumcision and the rites of Moses; and the insignificance of being circumcised unless the rite was improved to answer the design for which it was divinely appointed. Here it must be carefully observed, that the Apostle is done with the moral law, in his argument, and is speaking entirely of the ceremonial law; and if the reader will not carefully notice this circumstance, but will blend this moral and ceremonial law together, in this part of the Apostle's arguments, (and indeed he will have many learned commentators and divines to lead him into this snare,) he will lose the sense of the Apostle entirely, and make him flatly contradict his foregoing arguments.

The Apostle admitted that circumcision was an advantage to a man, ωφελεί, it was a good means to assist

him, and would prove serviceable to him, εαν νομον πραδδης, if he practiced according to the proper spirit and design of the law of circumcision; but if, (παραβατης νομυ ης;) he should go contrary to the intent of the law, his circumcision would avail him nothing. Circumcision was appointed to be a token, a sign, or a seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham; in which covenant God promised that he would send the Messiah, as the seed of Abraham, and that all the families of the earth should be blessed in him. This promise he established with Abraham, (Gen., xii. 3 and xvii, 9–14, and xviii. 18,) with Isaac (Gen. xvii. 19 and 21, xii. and xxvi. 1–6,) and with Jacob, (Gen., xxviii. 3, 4, 13–14,) and with their seed. This covenant, therefore, pointed directly to Christ, in whom all the nations, both Jews and Gentiles, should be blessed with the Gospel. Circumcision was appointed as the seal of this covenant, and was a seal of the truth of the promise it contained; therefore the Apostle calls it a seal of the righteousness of faith, (Rom., iv. 11,) and it pointed to Jesus Christ as the promised seed, (Gal., iii. 16.)

Consequently, every circumcised person was bound by the law under which he was circumcised, to receive the Messiah when he would come. When, therefore, Christ came and was proposed in the Gospel to the circumcised Jews, those who believed on him, acted according to the genuine intention of that law under which they were circumcised, but those who believed not were transgressors of the law. The believer derived profit from his circumcision, as it led him to Christ, the promised Messiah; but to those who believed not, their circumcision was of no signification or advantage, and they made it a perfect nullity, by their unbelief.

26. Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision.

When the Gospel was given to the Gentiles, this privilege was granted them in perfect consonance with the covenant with Abraham. The promise of that covenant gave Christ to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. "In thee, and in thy seed shall all the families and nations of the earth be blessed," so that circumcision was a sign, a seal and a testimony that the Gospel should be offered to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Now, the Jews having the seal, would have been greatly profited and assisted by it in receiving the Messiah, had they improved it. But the Gentiles had no covenant seal given to them; yet when they embraced the promised Messiah and received the Gospel, they, by believing in Christ, fulfilled τα, δικαιωματα τς νομς, the requisitions of the law, to wit: of the law of circumcision. Thus the uncircumcised Gentile, by doing what circumcision signified, obtained the full benefit, as well as if he had been circumcised.

27. And shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter, and circumcision dost transgress the law.

The Gentile, who continued as he was born, without the sign of circumcision in his flesh, who, (τον νομον τελσσα,) accomplished the intention of the law, χρινει, condemned the Jew, who, (δια γραμματος,) by the written rule, and by circumcision in an external compliance with it, was one who παρα βατην νομς went contrary to the intent of the law, which we followed in its external rites. That is, the believing Gentile who, by faith, did what circumcision enjoined, would be acquitted and justified, while the Jew who enjoyed the written institution of circumcision, and externally complied with the bloody

rite, and yet rejected the Gospel, would be condemned for his unbelief.

28. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither *is that* circumcision which is outward in the flesh.

29. But he *is* a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter, whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

God has no respect to external rites and ordinances, any further than as means appointed to engage our hearts in the vital exercises of religion. A man was not esteemed a real Jew, one in actual covenant with God, because he was circumcised in his foreskin, according to the written law, nor was the cutting off of the flesh, the thing which entitled him to blessings of the covenant; but the circumcision of the heart, to wit: the soul acquiescing in the Gospel, and submitting to the plan of salvation, through the blood of the cross, as the only atonement for sin, which was the grand object of all the rites and typical ordinances of the ceremonial law. External circumcision and an outward attendance on the Jewish ritual, might claim the respect of men who cannot know the heart; but God, who requires truth in the inward man, and penetrates into the secrets of the mind, can give his approbation only to those who are genuine believers, and who are in spirit and in truth what they profess to be. Such God will honor and bless, but hypocritical professors he will reject and condemn.

Thus the Apostle demonstrated with great force of reasoning, that the Jews could be no more justified by the external rite of circumcision, while they did not act in a proper consistency with the injunctions of that ordinance, than they could by the moral law, while they transgressed the precepts of morality. It is necessary for us also to consider that the same arguments which are here used in the case of circumcision, will apply

equally to all the rites and typical ordinances of the Jewish economy, as they all pointed to Jesus, the glorious antitype, and could do no good, in point of justification, but only by faith in him.

If the Jews could receive no advantage from their ceremonial worship and rites in themselves, and if the Gentiles enjoyed equal benefit with the Jews, if they would embrace the Gospel; it is asked,

CHAP. III, 1. What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit *is* there of circumcision?

This the Apostles states as an objection to the foregoing conclusion. If it be so that a strict attention to the Jewish rites avail nothing in point of justification, and that the believing Gentiles are as acceptable to God as believing Jews, and that a believing Gentile is accepted without circumcision, and a circumcised Jew is rejected without faith, then what superiority belongs to a Jew? and where is the advantage of circumcision? The Apostle answers:

2. Much every way, chiefly because that *unto them* were committed the oracles of God.

If a privilege be enjoyed, it certainly places him who enjoys it, in a superior situation to those who are not favored with the same opportunity. If this privilege should be misimproved, it is rendered unprofitable, by the neglect or abuse of the person himself, who enjoys the privilege; but still that neglect, or abuse, does not place the person to whom the privilege was granted, on the same footing with those who had not been favored with the same opportunity. Thus although thousands of the Jews misimproved their advantages, and rendered themselves very criminal thereby, yet still it was true that they had a great preference to the Gentiles. Be-

cause the Gentiles were left in a state of darkness; but they had the holy Scriptures, which contained the divine oracles of God, and in consequence of this, they enjoyed all that rich variety of means of grace, and all the advantages of divine instruction, &c., which God was pleased to afford them; and their misimprovement of these precious advantages, proves nothing against their enjoying a superiority in point of privilege, although it rendered them liable to greater condemnation.

The Jewish nation was a repository of divine truth, where the oracles of God were kept in store for the use of the Church, and all the ordinances and ancient prophecies were preserved safe until the Messiah should come, and are now drawn forth to infinite advantage in the Christian Church, authenticating the doctrines of the Gospel, as the genuine doctrines of God, attested by ancient prophecies, types and symbols, all fulfilled in the conception, birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; the spread of the Gospel and the glory of the kingdom of the promised Messiah. So that from the Jews, the covenant people of God, under the seal of circumcision, though now rejected and cast out of his presence, arise great advantages and profit to the Church of Christ. And when these poor, despised tribes, now languishing under the sore judgments of God for the misimprovement of their opportunities, shall be restored to the favor of God, according to his promise, as the Apostle says, it will be as life from the dead.

3. For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

4. God forbid. Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written. That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

It is well known that the Jews as a nation were a

stubborn rebellious people, although there was always a remnant that believed in God and partook of the divine benefits of his covenant. And when Christ came in the flesh, as the long expected Messiah, the Jews as a nation rejected him, although a remnant still believed and was saved; but what if some, yea, what if a great majority, of the Jews did reject the Gospel, no argument can be drawn from thence against the unchangeable truth and faithfulness of God in fulfilling his word of promise in sending his son, Jesus Christ, as the promised seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. To impeach the faithfulness of the ever blessed God on account of our unbelief, would be both preposterous and wicked; and the Apostle rejects the idea with abhorrence. μη γενοιτο, this was a common phrase with the Apostle, and literally means, let it not be, and is very properly rendered by the English phrase, God forbid. As God is possessed of infinite perfection, we cannot suppose that any imperfection in man could possibly derogate from his infinite truth; yea, should the whole nation of Israel reject the Gospel, and every man under heaven prove deceitful and false, yet the faithfulness of God would stand firm to his word and promise. Thus as the Psalmist David says in Psalm li. 4: God in his righteous judgments will manifest the righteousness of his divine procedure against the bold and impertinent cavils of wicked men, who should dare to impeach his moral government.

5. But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance, (I speak as a man.)

6. God forbid; for then how should God judge the world.

The Apostle having made a digression from his main subject in the 3d and 4th verses, to answer an objection

arising from the infidelity of the Jews, here makes a further digression, to answer an objection against the doctrine of justification by free grace through the righteousness of Christ.

The Apostle speaks as personating a Jew, or any man who should object against the Gospel, as giving countenance to sin, If our iniquities be a display of the excellence of the righteousness which Christ has wrought out, as our surety, and which God is pleased to propose in his Gospel to sinners, who cannot be justified by their own obedience to the law, (as the Apostle had argued,) what shall be said to this circumstance? Can God as a righteous governor, justly inflict his wrath upon sinners for those crimes which enhance his own glory, and greatly commend and exalt his divine goodness and compassion, manifested in the Gospel, on the doctrine of salvation, by free grace alone? Would not God be unjust to punish a man for doing that which redounds to his glory.

In answer to this, the Apostle affirms that no such consequence can follow. Because, on such principles God could not judge sinners at all, if he could not condemn any conduct in a sinner which would, by Gods own wise management, redound to his glory. All sin shall redound to the glory of God; even the wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath, (to wit, what would not be to his glory,) he will restrain, (Psal. lxxvi. 10.) Yea, all the blasphemies of wicked men and devils shall show forth his glory, (Phil. ii, 9, 11.) If, therefore, God could not justly condemn a sin, which, by his infinitely wise government, shall issue in the glory of his kingdom, he could condemn no sin at all; for God will be honored in the condemnation of the wicked as well as in the justification of the righteous.

Therefore to object, on this principle, against the Gospel, is palpably absurd, for all the honor that God can receive from sinners, will either be in punishing them for their wickedness, or in redeeming them through the sufferings of Christ their surety, who satisfied justice in their room.

7. For if the truth of God hath more abounded, through my lie, unto his glory, why, yet, am I also judged as a sinner?

Here he answers the objection by stating it in a similar case, which was so plain that the absurdity of the principle evidently appears at first sight. If I advance the glory of God by uttering a wilful lie, why am I, nevertheless, condemned as a sinner? Why does not my advancing the glory of God, excuse me from the horrid sin of lying, when God will be glorified in it eventually. In this case, the absurdity of the objection appears so glaring, that no further arguments can make the matter plainer.

8. And not *rather* (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say) let us do evil that good may come, whose damnation is just.

The author can see no sense in the translation of this verse; but is of opinion that it is the conclusion which the Apostle has drawn from the previous arguments. The translators have inserted the word *rather*, after the word καιμη, but for what purpose I cannot see. I think λεγομεν is the word to be understood in the sentence, and then it ought to be translated thus.

Therefore we do not *say* (as it is slanderously reported of us, and as some affirm that we say,) that we may do evil that good may come; the condemnation of whom is according to justice.

According to the above arguments, the Apostle had

shown that salvation through imputed righteousness did not imply that God indulged a sinner in his iniquity, because he saw fit to magnify his grace in justifying the believer through faith, and not by his obedience to the moral law, and therefore he concludes that those who preached the gospel were free from the slanders which their enemies cast upon them, through mere ignorance of the genuine nature of the doctrines they taught; that they gave a license to mankind to practice evil, that the grace of the Gospel might be more glorified through the more abundant mercy of God extended through Christ to the most guilty. For, although the grace of God be greatly magnified, when extended to the vilest of sinners, yet those who do evil, and especially those who do evil from such an absurd principle, do incur the just displeasure of God, and their condemnation is according to the strict principles of justice. This point the Apostle brought in by way of digression, and consequently he touches it but slightly, and reserved a full discussion to the sixth chapter; and all from the third verse to the eighth, inclusive, might be enclosed in a parenthesis.

9. What then? Are we better *than they?* No, in no wise; for we have before proved, that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin.

Here the Apostle resumes his main subject from the second verse; where he had admitted that the Jews had greatly the advantage of the Gentiles, and that circumcision was very profitable; because the whole of the divine oracles were entrusted with them, and, consequently, they had a great opportunity of knowing the will of God. Here note, that Paul's calling the Old Testament λογια τϛ Θεϛ, the oracles of God, is a solid testimony by the inspired Apostle, that that holy book which was then in use among the Jews, which is the same as

that which the Christian church now possess, is indeed the word of God.

The Apostle now supposes a Jew to reply: "What? You admit that we have the preference in point of privileges. Are we not, therefore, preferable to the ignorant pagans in point of acceptance with God?" "Not at all," says the Apostle, because justification is not in consequence of external opportunities; but by a perfect righteousness. But the Apostle had already demonstrated from positive and universal facts that all, both Jews and Gentiles, were in a state of sin, so that there could be no preference among them in this respect, because they were all in a state of condemnation, as transgressors of the law of God.

10. As it is written, there is none righteous; no, not one.

Here, and in the following eight verses, the Apostle quotes a number of Scriptures to prove that the Jews were far from a justified state on the footing of perfect obedience to the moral law. The testimony of God is, there is none righteous; no, not one. (Psalms xiv. and liii. Job. xiv. 4; and xv. 14; and xxv. 4.) The whole human race is in a state of guilt and depravity, and not an individual of the race of Adam is exempted from the universal catastrophe.

11. There is none who understandeth, there is none who seeketh after God.

Mankind are by nature in a state of blindness, having no understanding of spiritual things, and consequently all are seeking after the gratification of their own lusts and evil propensities, and not after God. (Psalms xiv. and liii. Prov. i. 29, 30. Jer. iv. 22.)

12. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none who doeth good, no, not one.

Mankind have universally swerved from the path of

duty, and have lost the road to happiness; they are become unprofitable, that is, they do not in their conduct aim at the glory of God, which was the end for which they were created, and for which they were capacitated as rational creatures; none do that which could, in the proper sense of the word, be called *good*, when their very best actions are brought to the standard of the Divine law. (Psalms xiv. 3 and liii. 3.)

13. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of the asp is under their lips.

Their throat, which is the channel of luxury, is insatiable; as open sepulchres, which never say they are satisfied. Or their evil conversation is noxious and infectious as opened graves, which send forth a cadaverous nauseousness. (Psalms v. 9.) They practice deceit and lying with their tongues; that noble organ of speech is prostituted to deception and falsehood. (Ps. v. 9, and xii. 3, 4, and xxxvi. 3. Jer. ix. 3.) Their lips are employed in slander, ribaldry and backbiting, and all such manner of conversation as is fitly compared to the deadly poison of that venomous kind of serpents called the asp; whose bite seldom admits of a cure, except by immediately cutting off the part affected. The person bitten quickly, without much pain, is thrown into a sleepy, torpid state, and dies insensible. But although the operation of the poison is soft and easy, it is quick and fatal. So licentious conversation is a quick, insensible poison, hard to cure, and fatal to the person effected. Psalms cxl. 3.

14. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Thus every part of the organs of speech by which mankind are distinguished for communicating their thoughts and ideas to one another is employed in wick-

edness, and instead of useful communion with mankind and in praising their glorious Creator, their mouths are employed in profanation and wicked and malevolent imprecations, as also bitter wranglings, and envious slanders, and revilings. Psalm x. 7.

15. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

They are eager in their malicious pursuits, to gratify their spite and revenge, and in prosecuting their murderous designs. Prov. i. 16. Is. lix. 7.

16. Destruction and misery are in their ways.

The ways of the wicked tend to the unhappiness and final ruin both of themselves and others. Is. lix. 7.

17. And the way of peace have they not known.

Though the wicked are on the pursuit of happiness, yet they are strangers to the paths of peace. The way they go leads to destruction and misery; but they wickedly shun the way to peace and happiness. Is. lix. 8.

18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Through the depravity of the heart, mankind have lost the fear of God, and consequently they disregard his authority, his precepts, his threatenings and his judgments; and, therefore, they are wholly set to do evil, and indulge in all kinds of wickedness, and are prone to follow after their own foolish imagination to their final ruin and misery. Gen. vi. 5. Psalm xxxvi. 1–4 and xiv. 1 and liii. 1.

This collection of Scriptural testimonies is a sad proof of the depravity of the human heart, and shows what need we all have of a better righteousness than we can possibly have, of ourselves, to justify us in the sight of a most just and righteous God. The Apostle does not intend to prove that all mankind, without exception, still continue

in this awful state of guilt and wretchedness; but only to show that this is the natural state of all the human race, Jews as well as Gentiles, without exception, and that in this state all the fallen race of Adam will continue unless they are redeemed from it by the blood of Christ.

19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

The Jews, fond of flattering themselves in their own righteousness, when these divine declarations were alleged against them, were disposed to plead not guilty, as supposing these characteristics all alluded to the state of the Gentiles. They were willing to admit that the Gentiles were justly charged with the crimes stated in the above catalogue; but as for them, they considered themselves the peculiar people of God, and consequently were free from such gross imputations.

But the Apostle reminds them, that it was self-evident, that whatever determination the law pronounced, it was especially and pointedly pronounced upon them who were the proper subjects of the law, and as this was the verdict of the written law, it especially belonged to them, to whom the written law was given. So that they were obliged to acknowledge themselves to be the very persons charged with the criminality alleged by the written law, as the written word had nothing to do with the Gentiles, but only with the Jews, to whom it was given. Inasmuch, therefore, as the Gentiles were condemned, as had already been proved, by the law of reason, and as the written law condemned the Jews, therefore every mouth was completely stopped, and no excuse could be admitted, and the whole world of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, must stand condemned before God, their righteous Judge, as transgressors.

20. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his right; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Here the Apostle draws the conclusion of his whole argument, to wit: that no one born of Adam shall be justified before God, by their acts of obedience to the law, whether of the written law or the law discovered by the light of reason, as the law is transgressed by all, both Jew and Gentile. Because, although any just law must justify a subject, who has perfectly obeyed it, yet if ever it is transgressed, all the law can do on the principles of justice, is to convince of sin, so that all the human race must expect to stand arraigned at the bar of justice, as transgressors of the holy law of God. And blessed is the man who gets a right knowledge of his sinful state in time, while the Gospel gives him an opportunity of believing on Christ, that he may be justified by faith, through the great atonement of the cross.

LECTURE IV.

ROMANS III., 21–31.

21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

22. Even the righteousness of God, *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them who believe, for there is no difference.

23. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

25. Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

26. To declare, *I say*, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

These six verses contain a full statement of the plan of the Gospel in miniature. The Greek word δικαιοσυνη, although the Apostle frequently uses it, to signify the righteousness which is imputed to the believer, for justification, yet the primary and simple meaning of it is *justice*, or *rectitude*, or that principle by which God, or any intelligent being, acts in a perfect conformity to law. The author, therefore, begs leave to translate these verses according to the most simple sense of the Greek, as he is of opinion that the literal sense is the best, and adds a divine dignity to the passage. The Apostle had fully demonstrated that all mankind are in a state of guilt, and that they could not be justified by their own obedience to the law of God consistent with the justice of God's moral government. Having fully demonstrated

this point, he proceeded to lay down his plans of justification according to the Gospel, consistent with the strictest principles of justice and the requisitions of the law of God, which is as follows:

21. But now the justice of God is made manifest, without *our obedience to* the law; it being attested by the law and the prophets.

22. Even the justice of God *is manifested* through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, with respect to all *the Jews*, and in behalf of all the Gentiles, who believe *in him*, (for there is no distinction.

23. For all have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God.)

24. They being justified freely by his grace, through the vicarious ransom which *was paid* by Christ Jesus.

25. Whom God hath substituted as the atonement, through faith, by his blood, for a demonstration of his justice, by a transfer of *our accumulated* offences *to him*, through the indulgence of God.

26. For a declaration of his justice, *made* at this very time, so that he might be just, even when he justifies him who is of the faith of Jesus.

The Apostle has two great objects in view: one is to save the guilty sinner, the other to vindicate the justice of God in justifying the ungodly. In order to secure both these, he introduces Jesus Christ as the sinner's surety, to answer the demands of justice in his behalf, and interests the sinner in the atonement by faith. The atonement being thus set to the believer's account, the law is honored by the satisfaction of the surety, and God is perfectly just in justifying the sinner for Jesus' sake. Thus God, according to this astonishing plan of grace, can be just, and justify him who believes on Jesus.

Note.—The Apostle is here laying down the full

grounds of a sinner's justification, and stating to us in what that righteousness consists, which is set to the believer's account, for his justification, and what does he say? He confines this justifying righteousness to the satisfaction of the cross, he calls it, απολυτρωσις, which simply means the ransom, or price that is paid for the redemption of a prisoner. He also cals it ιλαςηριον, which signifies an atonement, or a sacrifice offered to appease the wrath of God. He says that this atonement was made by his blood, and that he cancelled our debt, and that we obtain justification thereby. Neither does he mention a single syllable about what divines call the active obedience of Christ being imputed for our justification. He seems to have no idea of such a thing being necessary. And if the active obedience of Christ be necessary, how astonishing is it that the Apostle should omit such an important article of our justification, even when he was professedly treating the very grounds on which the sinner is made righteous. The plain, undeniable truth is, the Apostle would unquestionably have spoken of it had it been true. But the doctrine of Christ's active obedience being a constituent part of our justifying righteousness, is not true, and therefore he is silent on that subject, even when he is professedly arguing the very grounds of our justification.

On what ground, and by what authority, then, do commentators interpolate their vague notions? Wherefore do they, in their expositions, carefully supply the words, *active obedience,* and perfect righteousness, as connected with, and distinct from, the atonement, when the Apostle has as carefully left them out, as they are anxious to have them in? The Apostle's plan is a very good one, and we need not try to mend it. We have no authority but what the Scriptures give us, and let us be

contented, and not pretend to be wise above what is written.

The Apostle's words are plain, and by no means equivocal nor abstruse.

21. *But now,* although all men be in a state of condemnation, and it be necessary that justice should be satisfied, and the honor of the divine government maintained, yet, on the plan of the Gospel, *the justice of God is made manifest without* our obedience to *the law,* or any righteousness of our own to recommend us to his favor, the full satisfaction to justice *being attested,* and held forth to our view in the typical sacrifices required *by the* Levitical *law,* and by the many predictions of *the prophets* all pointing to the great atonement of Christ.

22. *Even the* most perfect and inflexible *justice of God* is manifested, and clearly evinced *by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ* to his engagements with his Father in the covenant of redemption, to render ample satisfaction in the room of sinners; which satisfaction was not intended for all mankind without exception, but was only relevant *with respect to all the Jews, and in behalf of all* the Gentiles who believe, as the only condition on which it can be applied, either to Jews or Gentiles; (*for there is destruction,* or respect of persons,

23. *For all* mankind *have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God,* and have been altogether deficient in rendering that obedience and regard to him which his divine honor required, as their great creator, preserver and governor.)

24 *Those* who believe on Jesus, whether Jews or Gentiles, *are freely justified by his* special *grace* and favor, *through the vicarious ransom* (δια της απολυτρωσεως) *which* was paid *by Christ Jesus,* our adorable surety.

25. *Whom God hath substituted as the atonement* for

our sins, to be applied to us *through faith* (ον προεθετο ο Θεος ιλαστηριον,) *by his blood, for a demonstration* (εις ενδειξιν) *of his justice, by a* gracious *transfer of our accumulated offences*, of which we had been guilty, by our past misconduct, which was all set to his account as our surety, *through the indulgence of* our compassionate *God*, who was pleased, in his abundant patience and long suffering towards us, to accept of satisfaction at the hands of our surety instead of us.

26. *For*, this wonderful plan God has adopted, to give *a declaration of his* most perfect *justice* in saving sinners, which was made *at this very time*, long foretold by the prophets, when Jesus hung on the accursed tree, and was made a sacrifice for sin, *so that he might be just*, and act in perfect harmony with his infinite perfections, and to the honor of his moral government, *even when he justifies* him *who is of the faith of Jesus;* that is, who is possessed of that faith which interests the soul in the merits of Christ.

NOTE.—Although the scriptures often speak of forgiveness, alluding to our justification, yet justification, in its proper sense, has no connection with the pardon of sin; and when the scriptures speak of justification, under the idea of pardon or forgiveness, these words are not used in their natural meaning. It is very natural for us to use the English word *pardon* or *forgiveness*, when we speak of our justification; because there never can be a greater display of mercy and compassion toward a guilty sinner, than when, according to the gospel, his sins are imputed to Christ, and the righteousness of Christ is counted over to him. This is the idea we ought always to have, when we use the word pardon or forgiveness relative to our acceptance with God, through Jesus Christ; and this is the sense in which the scrip-

tures always use these words, when justification is meant. But this is not the proper meaning of the English word *pardon* or *forgiveness*. To pardon, is, through mere pity, to withhold just punishment from a guilty person, and let him pass with his guilt upon him. Thus, pardon never removes guilt, it only remits the punishment. A guilty person is, in justice, no less guilty after he is pardoned than before, he only goes free from the punishment which is due to him. Pardon, properly, belongs to a father, a master, or a governor, but not to a judge. God's children, in a thousand instances, are forgiven through the clemency of their Heavenly Father; he pardons their daily offences upon their prayers, confessions, repentance and reformation. But when God justifies the believer, he acts on very different principles. Justification is an act of God, by which he, on the principles of justice, pronounces the believer free from guilt, without sin, and not deserving punishment. Therefore a guilty sinner never can be justified, but only by making full atonement for his sin. This can only be done vicariously, to wit: by setting to his account the perfect atonement of Christ. When this perfect righteousness is imputed, the believer is justified, because he has, by his surety, atoned for all his sins; and when God, acting as a just judge, pronounces the believer free from guilt, he justifies him. Now it is plain as the sun in the firmament, that if God, as a judge, should pronounce a guilty sinner to be just, who had been a rebel to his government, and had trampled on his laws, he would tarnish his justice, and act contrary to the equitable demands of his divine law. But, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, there is a perfect satisfaction made to divine justice, in the sinners behalf, by the invaluable sacrifice of the dear Son of God. When,

therefore, this perfect atonement is imputed by faith, it perfectly frees the believer from guilt; and God is perfectly just, in justifying him who believeth on Jesus.

27. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith.

On this mode of justification, what room can there be found for that ostentation and pride, which the self-righteous Pharisee is so fond of arrogating to himself, as a descendant of Abraham, and in covenant with God by circumcision? Such empty vauntings are perfectly excluded by this humiliating plan of justification. But by (ποιᾳ νομῳ,) what kind of a law, (as it ought to be rendered.) It is abundantly evident from the whole economy of God, that he intended to cut off all occasion for boasting from sinners in their salvation, and that they should feel themselves entirely dependent on his boundless grace for all their happiness. This appears from many passages, particularly see Deut. ix. 4—6; Ezek. xvi. and xxxvi. 31, 32; Is. xlviii. 9—11; compared with 1 Cor. i. 27—31. Now by what rule or law could this be effected? What kind of a law must that of necessity be which would save sinners, so as to exclude all boasting, and give all the glory to God? Could it be a law to justify a sinner by his own works? The absurdity of this appears too glaring to admit of any dispute, whether it be a moral or a ceremonial law. The truth is, no kind of a law could effect this purpose but *the law of faith;* that is, the gospel, the standing rule of which is to justify the believer only, who, under a sense of his own guilt and unworthiness, seeks, by faith, to be justified by the righteousness of another, and not by any merit of his own.

28. Therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

This verse contains the Apostle's conclusion, which he draws, as the necessary result of all his chain of argument, on the great subject of a sinner's justification. And his conclusion is that a man, that is any man, or every man who ever is justified, is justified by faith, to wit: in consequence of a hearty acquiescence in Christ, as his only righteousness, even by his giving his hearty consent to the proposal of the gospel, agreeing to be saved by Jesus Christ only, looking to and depending on him for salvation. He who thus surrenders to the gospel, shall be freely justified through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him without the deeds of the law; that is, entirely independent of all his works of obedience to the moral law. Even the act of faith itself does not justify, as an act of moral obedience, but only in consequence of its being the stated condition of our interest in the merits of Christ, it being nothing more than a mere compliance with a positive appointment, and an act of the will, by which the sinner heartily consents to be saved according to the gospel.

The Apostle forbids us to join any moral duty to faith, as the condition of our own justification; neither love, repentance, obedience to the law, acts of charity, devotion or worship, nor any duty we endeavor to perform, is to be mentioned, or even thought of, or desired, as connected with faith, in our justification. God justifies an *ungodly* sinner for Christ's sake only; having nothing to give him any claim to justification, but merely his coming to Christ, as a guilty, wretched, lost, and ruined creature, having no righteousness of his own to bring with him.

There is great darkness cast on the Gospel, and great evil done to the souls of men, by connecting legal words

with faith, when it is spoken of as the condition of our justification. The Apostle was not afraid to let faith stand single, without any other Christian grace, to give it currency. We find no such phrases as "Repentance, meaning sorrow for sin, and faith; faith and obedience repentance, sincere obedience and faith; faith, love and repentance; penitent faith, obedient faith, &c," when Christ and his Apostles are treating the subject of our justification in the sight of God, and stating the condition of that justification. These are the peculiar phrases which blot the pages of commentators, in order to guard the simple doctrines of the apostles from abuse, lest some poor soul should be led astray, by taking encouragement to come to Christ in all his guilt and wretchedness, by faith only. The second chapter of the epistle of James is resorted to, as a noble precedent to guard against Paul's doctrine of justification by faith; not considering that St. James was speaking of works not as concomitants of saving faith, but as the subsequent effects produced in the life and conversation of those who had been justified before by faith only. Faith has no recommendatory concomitants; *est sui generis*, it is a grace of its own kind, and stands alone in our justification; and neither love, evangelical repentance, holiness, nor any saving grace of God, has anything to do with it, till it apprehends Christ as our only justifying righteousness; after that, it produces grace upon grace, and works upon works, and proves that we have believed, and are made partakers of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. Thus after Rahab believed in the God of Israel, she received the spies, as the proper part of her faith; and Abraham believed God, and was justified upwards of forty years before he offered up his son

Isaac. These good works were not concomitants of their faith when they were justified, but consequential effects of justification.

Therefore, let us always conclude with the Apostle, and let us write it in letters of gold, that "*a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law.*"

29. *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *Is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yea, of the Gentiles also.

30. Seeing *it is* one God, who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith.

The Apostle wished to impress it upon their minds that there was no distinction between the Jew and the Gentile, in point of justification. He alleged that God was the same towards both; for the same God justified both by faith through the merits of Christ. Dr. Doddridge and Mr. L'Enfant, translate the 30th verse thus: "So that *it is* one God who will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through (or by) the same faith." But I rather think the verse should be rendered thus: Inasmuch as *he is* one God who will justify the circumcision *who are* of faith, and the uncircumcision by the same faith. The sense is, the same God justifies both the Jews and the Gentiles, who are believers, by the same faith; which proves that he is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews, and does not respect the one above the other.

The phrase εκ πιστεως seems to be a mode of expression the Apostle frequently used to signify those who were believers. In this sense he used it in verse 26th, "that he might be just and the justifier of him εκ πιστεως who is a believer in Jesus." So also in Gal. iii. 7, "They who are, εκ πιστεως, of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." And in verse 8, "Knowing that God would justify the Gentiles εκ πιστεως who believe;" and verse

9, "so that they who ἐκ πίστεως are believers." See also Rom. iv. 16, and many other places. God would not justify all the Jews, nor yet all the Gentiles; but he would, by the same faith, justify all of both, Jews and Gentiles, who, ἐκ πίστεως, were of the faith, that is those who were believers.

31. Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid, yea, we establish the law.

Instead of destroying the law, or derogating from its honor, or laying it aside as useless, the Gospel confirms it, and exhibits it in a very honorable point of view. Even the ceremonial law was honored and confirmed by the Gospel. Jesus Christ, appearing as the great antitype of all the sacrifices and ordinances of the ritual of Moses, showed the proper and important use of those typical institutions, which without him would have had no meaning; and no consistency or propriety could have been attached to them. But Christ explained and dignified the whole; and hence he said, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil."

Also the moral law is established and honored by the Gospel. The Gospel shows the awful sanction of the law established in the bloody sacrifice of the cross. The unrelenting vigor of its penal demands was exhibited with infinite dignity in the divine sufferer. The Gospel shows the rectitude and the scrupulously exact economy of the divine government, and points out the propriety of God's demanding most perfect obedience to the rules he has prescribed to his creatures. The Gospel calls us to compare our hearts and lives with the holy precepts of the law, in order to convince us of our guilt and depravity, that we may see and feel our need of a Saviour.

But especially it is the Gospel, only, that can bring us again to a conformity to the holy law of God, by restoring us to the friendship of heaven in our justification, and giving us a covenant claim to the communications of divine grace, to dispose and enable us to walk according to God's holy will, as the rule of our lives. The Holy Spirit, by the Gospel, is sent down into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of the glory of God in Christ Jesus, which inclines us to that which is good, draws our affections to God and his divine law, makes us hate sin and love holiness. And thus our corrupt hearts are subdued, and our souls are drawn and disposed to obey the will of our Heavenly Father. Thus, holiness is the effect of our having an interest in Christ; therefore, a holy obedience to the divine law is an evidence of our faith, and proves that we have an interest in the Gospel.

LECTURE V.

ROMANS IV. 1–8.

1. What shall we then say that Abraham, our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?
2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.
3. For what saith the Scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

The Apostle here introduces Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation, as a particular instance of justification by free grace, through faith, and not by obedience to the law. This was a bold, and a very ingenious stroke in support of his argument. The Jews considered Abraham as the greatest man in the world, and the most exemplary for piety and holiness. If, therefore, it could be proved from the Divine word, and by clear deductions therefrom, that even Abraham was justified by faith, without the deeds of the law, and that believers were accounted his children, not by circumcision, but by faith only, surely the posterity of Abraham could lay claim to no merit, who never pretended to equal merit with Abraham, their renowned progenitor. These three verses are neither well arranged, pointed, or translated. The author would construe them in the following manner:

1. Now, what do we say that Abraham, our father, hath acquired, according to the flesh?

2. For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath ground for boasting.

3. But *he had* none in the sight of God; for what doth the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

When we inquire accurately what gain or legal advantage Abraham received in the view of God, when he was justified, we will soon find, according to the account the Scripture gives, that he had no ground of boasting, according to the flesh, that is on a legal score (which is the sense in which the Apostle generally uses the word κατα σαρκα, according to, or after, the flesh.) But had he been justified by his good works, he would have had occasion of glorying in his own meritorious obedience. But the Scripture affirms that he was accounted righteous, because he believed the promise of God, and acquiesced in the covenant God was pleased to make with him (Gen. xv.) When God first called Abraham out of the land of Haran, he entered into covenant with him, and engaged to bless him, and make him a great nation, and particularly that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. Abraham acquiesced in the will of God, (Gen. xii. 1–4.) Afterwards, when Abraham had sojourned about nine or ten years in the promised land, God renewed his covenant with him, and promised him an heir, and engaged to make his seed as the stars of the firmament for number (Gen. xv.) when it is recorded (v. 6,) that "Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."

It is with great reason admitted that Jesus Christ was the Lord who appeared to Abraham, and all the patriarchs and prophets (1 Cor. x. 4, 9; Heb. xi. 26.) So that the plain sense of this text is, that Abraham believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Abraham not only gave credit to what the Lord declared to him, that he should have seed, and that in his seed all the families of

the earth should be blessed, but he acquiesced in the plan, and looked to the fulfillment of the covenant for the blessing. And thus he was, in the full sense of the word, a believer in the promised Messiah, and cordially acquiesced in the purpose of God to save sinners by Jesus Christ. This faith, or acquiesence, or consent of his mind, being the proper condition of the covenant of grace, was accounted to Abraham for righteousness, or rather for a covenant claim to that righteousness by which he was justified. Thus it appears that Abraham's justification was not by the works of the law, but simply by acquiescing in Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. It is supposed with great probability, (see Ezek. xvi.) that Abraham and Sarah were, with the rest of the Chaldees, abominable idolaters, before the Lord called Abraham to leave his family and his native conutry, to sojourn in the land of Canaan. This circumstance adds great strength to the Apostle's argument; as it appears that Abraham was called out of a wretched state of idolatry, and justified by believing in the promised Messiah, previous to any possibility of good works.

4. Now to him who worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5. But to him who worketh not, but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

It is a self-evident case, that when a reward is given to a man who has earned it by his labor, that reward is not considered as a gratuity, but the payment of a just debt. But, on the other hand, when a man gets a bounty from that glorious God, who is pleased to grant justification to a wicked, ungodly sinner, merely because he consents to receive it, and agrees to the generous proposal, that ungodly sinner gets his claim to justification merely by his acquiescence; and upon a cove-

nant plan, his agreement to the offer of grace is accounted to him for righteousness; that is, the righteousness, necessary to his justification, is adjudged to him upon the account of his faith; and he is justified by free grace and not as a reward for his works.

Here, it is to be noticed with care and attention, that the Apostles in strong and decided language, asserts that God, in granting the covenant claim of faith, according to the plan of the Gospel, justifies the ungodly, not the man who is renewed in the temper of his heart, not him who is formed after God's holy image, who delights in God, and hates sin, and is conformed to the divine will, but *an ungodly man*, one who is, ασεβης, unholy, who is not a worshipper of God, and consequently one who is yet in his sins, in a state of depraved nature; although sensible of his wretchedness, he is come, on the free invitation of the Gospel, to Christ, for relief. This is Paul's notion of the real state of a sinner, when he applies for justification, and obtains it, by faith, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ; I say this is St. Paul's notion, the sentiments of commentators and divines to the contrary, notwithstanding.

Dr. Scott was one among many who strenuously held that *regeneration* was antecedent to faith. By regeneration he means a change of heart from sin to holiness. After the doctor has given, indeed, a very correct and an elegant explanation of the sense of the Apostle in these two verses, he finds himself gravelled in his old established sentiment of the necessity of a holy heart previous to believing. He, therefore, is obliged to undo all he had said and turn against both the Apostle and himself, to save his cause from sinking under the weight of the Apostles argument. "This man who worketh not," says he, "will indeed diligently use appointed

means of grace, repent, forsake sin, with earnestness, consientiously perform his several duties, and even becomes zealous of good works; yet he *worketh not at all*, with an aim or expectation of obtaining righteousness in this way, which he knows to be absolutely impossible." Now, if the doctor means that a man after he is justified and is taken under the government of divine grace, is disposed to be thus diligent in good works, and yet puts no dependence on them to recommend him to divine acceptance, he is perfectly right, But what is the use of all he has said; none will dispute this point with him, nor has the Apostle said any thing to the contrary; but the doctor is speaking of one man and the Apostle of another and, consequently, all that is said here, is off the point, and serves for nothing but a blind, to shade the Apostle's argument. But if the doctor means that the sinner will come dressed in all these good works, to Christ, even although he may not plead merit before his Redeemer on their account, but really possesses them, as a kind of useless ornament, he is wrong, and flatly contradicts the whole scope of the Apostle's arguments. The truth is, no works that a sinner can do can be called good until he has actually believed, and believing is the first thing that a sinner does, which is acceptable to God.

But says the doctor, "He is not, indeed, absolutely *ungodly*, at the time of his justification; for his humility, submission and faith, are effects of regeneration, which is the source of all godliness in a fallen creature. Yet he is justified, as ungodly in himself, in strict justice and according to the law; he comes for the blessing, as *ungodly*."

So then, it seems that what the Apostle said has to go for *nothing*, so much time is lost, and so much paper

wasted, for no purpose. Paul had affirmed with all the authority he had, that God justified the *ungodly*. He could easily have said those who were *partly* ungodly and *partly* holy; and no doubt he would have said so, had he been of Dr. Scott's opinion. But the doctor asserts that a man is not absolutely *ungodly* at the time of his justification; without any authority but what his opinions had gained by age and popularity. But why is he *partly* godly? Because, says the doctor, "his humility, submission and faith, are effects of regeneration, which is the source of all godliness in a fallen creature." But here the doctor begs the question from the Apostle, and affirms that regeneration; or a renewed nature is previous to faith. The Apostle would admit that what divines call regeneration, is the source of holiness in the heart of a sinner, (Eph. iv., 17, 24,) but he has never admitted that a sinner must be renewed to holiness, or godliness, before he is justified by faith; nay, he has peremptorily denied it, by asserting that God justifies *the ungodly*. For any man to assert directly contrary to the Apostle, and then to give as a reason for his assertion, that a believer is humble and submissive, as the fruit of regeneration, even because his heart is changed from sin to godliness, before he believes, is neither fair reasoning nor modesty.

What is it constitutes a godly man? Surely not perfection in holiness; or, there is no godly man upon earth, for there is none perfect. Then for a man to be renewed in his heart, and disposed, even in an imperfect degree, to genuine repentance, and submission to the will of God, constitutes him a godly man. It is true he is not completely holy, but he is what the Scripture calls *a godly man*, and he is what Paul would not have called *ungodly*. But the Apostle did say that God justifies the *ungodly;*

and Dr. Scott says they are not "absolutely ungodly at the time of justification," that is, they are partly godly, and partly ungodly. So we must conclude that the Apostle was partly right and partly wrong, or that the doctor was wrong altogether and the Apostle right. But the doctor adds, "yet he is justified *as ungodly* in himself, in strict justice and according to law." How are we to understand this? The man is not "absolutely ungodly," yet he is "justified as ungodly." How could he be considered as ungodly, when he was not ungodly? and how could he be *not ungodly* when strict justice and the law condemned him as ungodly? It requires keen sight to perceive how a God of justice, and the justice of God, and the law of God, could consider a man as *ungodly*, when he was really made *godly* by the grace of God renewing his heart. But it will be said that his godliness is not considered in point of justification; that the man is really godly, but God takes no account of it in justifying him. I ask, then, what good does it do for a man to be renewed before he is justified, if God takes, no notice of it? He might just as well be, as the Apostle says, *ungodly*, for if God pays no respect to godliness, in the article of justification, it is only useless lumber for God could justify as well without it as with it. A man might as well be ungodly, as for justice and the law to count him so; and let the vilest sinners that ever breathed come to Christ on this plan, he could not come in a worse state than that in which justice would be obliged to consider him; and if he were as holy as Paul himself, the law could pay no respect to his holiness; and he would meet with the very same reception by the Gospel, if he were as wicked as Satan, if he only believed; so that, even on this plan, it would be useless to sanctify a man before he believed. Let renovation

come after faith, as the proper work of Christ's spirit, and it will be of some account to the believer in a life of religion, but before justification, neither God, nor justice, nor law, will pay any respect to it.

But after all, how does it come, I would ask the doctor, that justice and the law will not count a man godly, who is godly? And how can justice count a man ungodly, who really is not so? I always thought justice told the truth; but it is not true, it never was true, and it never will, or can be true, that a man is godly and ungodly at the same time; and for *justice* and *law* to count a man ungodly, when a godly heart is formed in him by the Spirit of God, would be *justice* and *law* with a witness.

But the doctor goes on, "Abraham, several years before, by faith, obeyed the call and command of God, and therefore, could not be, strictly speaking, altogether *ungodly*, when it was said, he believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Could not the doctor consider that a man might be actually justified a long time before God might see fit to declare it to the world? Abraham was justified, dead, and gone to heaven, three or four hundred years before Moses wrote that verse that says "Abraham believed in the Lord," &c.; and what is that to the point in hand? The Apostle did not say that Abraham was not justified before God was pleased to renew the covenant with him the second time, he only quotes the text as Moses recorded it, to prove that when Abraham did believe, he was justified by his faith, and not by works. The doctor says, "Abraham, several years before, *by faith* obeyed the call," &c. But I would ask even if Abraham did, *by faith*, obey the call of God, before the time that Moses stated that his faith justified him, (and no matter

if it was a hundred years before,) did he obey the call before he believed? If so, how did he obey it? *By faith?* If he obeyed the call of God *by faith*, was not his faith previous to his obedience. In Gen. xii. 1–4, it is proved, by Moses, that God had called Abraham, and had promised to bless him, and had given the promise of the Messiah to bless all the families of the earth, and that "Abraham departed as the Lord had spoken." Now is it not evident that Abraham believed in God, and acquiesced in his promise, before he set out on his journey? And was not his faith before his obedience? Abraham, then, was justified previous to any act of obedience, and the Apostle is still correct in his argument; and Abraham was, strictly speaking, altogether *ungodly*, as the Apostle argues, when his faith was counted to him for righteousness. And there is no circumstance in the history that gives the least intimation to the contrary. The doctor adds further, "So that the example of Abraham is alone a full and clear refutation of the construction by some put on this text, that men are altogether, and in every sense, ungodly and unregenerate, at the time when God justifies them; a sentiment of most dangerous tendency."

Here is a grand curiosity! Paul thought that Abraham was a good example to prove that a man is justified without any obedience to the law, and that God justifies the *ungodly* by faith only, and he introduces him for that very purpose. Dr. Scott thought otherwise. He thought that a man is not *ungodly* when he is justified; but that he possesses "humility, submission and faith, as the effect of regeneration, which is the source of all godliness." See how doctors differ; and what is truly astonishing, he brings in Abraham as a special instance to prove directly contrary to what the Apostle expected

him to prove, even that he was justified in a state of holiness, and that he was not *ungodly* when he believed in God. Dr. Scott argues that Abraham had some acts of obedience before it was said that he was justified by faith which proved that he was not "altogether *ungodly* when he believed." Paul thought not. That if Abraham had been thus obedient before his faith, he would have had reason to glory; but he had no ground for boasting in the sight of God. Paul thought that justification was not of debt, as the reward of one who worked; but of grace, as one who was justified by believing on him who justifies the *ungodly*, and he thought Abraham a good example to prove all this. But, alas! it seems, according to Dr. Scott, that the venerable Apostle was quite mistaken, and the manner of Abraham's justification proves the very reverse of what the Apostle expected. The Doctor thought he was obedient; that he worked; that he obeyed the call of God, and consequently was not *ungodly*.

But Moses is like to turn the tables on the Doctor; for he represents Abraham as coming out of a horrid state of idolatry in the land of Chaldea, and making a covenant with God, acquiescing in the promise of a Messiah, before he obeyed the call of God, to leave his native land; and Paul takes the hint (Heb. xi. 8,) and roundly asserts that he obeyed this call *by faith:* so Abraham was a poor, idolatrous, ungodly heathen, when he believed in God, and was justified by his faith simply, and his obedience came afterwards.

So the doctor's theory of godliness before justification falls to the ground; and the Apostle's plan stands good, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, and that God justifies the *ungodly*.

But the doctor thinks this a very dangerous opinion;

"a sentiment of the most dangerous tendency." But when the Apostle ventures to assert this opinion, it seems to be true, let it be dangerous, or not; and if it be the plan of God, we must risk the danger, for we cannot alter it. But what danger is there in a poor, ungodly sinner coming to Christ? Must he bring a heart full of godliness, and his hands full of obedience to keep off the danger, and prevent the bad tendency of believing on Jesus? Jesus is able to save, and he never cast off one yet, who came to him. He saved the thief on the cross; he saved Saul of Tarsus; (no wonder Paul thought that God justified the ungodly. If he had no other argument, he had one, *ad hominem*, that was enough to satisfy him;) he saved the jailor; he saved Mary Magdalene; he saved Zaccheus. For my part, I wish I could persuade thousands of such ungodly wretches to believe on him; they might come and welcome, with all their ungodliness—and the more ungodly, the more honor Christ would have in saving them, and purifying them from all iniquity, and making them a peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works.

6. Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;

7. *Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8. Blessed *is* the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

The Apostle here produces David, who, speaking of the happiness of those whom God justifies by imputed righteousness, without works, says, in very decisive language: Blessed are they whose iniquities are remitted, and whose sins are covered with the robe of imputed righteousness; that is to say, blessed is the man to whom God will not impute sin, but considers perfectly righteous, notwithstanding his past transgressions, in conse-

quence of his interest in the atonement of Christ. (Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.)

The sins of a believer are remitted upon the account of the perfect satisfaction rendered to justice by his surety. The idea of forgiveness, or pardon, when applied to a sinner's justification, (as is observed in Lect. IV.) is not the literal, or commonly received idea of those words; but they are used in what is called an improper sense. When God justifies a sinner, he performs an act of grace, in suspending the stroke of justice, with respect to the sinner, personally, and so far it is pardon, or forgiveness. But still the stroke of justice is inflicted, though not on the sinner, but on his surety, who vicariously renders full satisfaction to the broken law, by answering its penal demands. When, therefore, this satisfaction is placed to the account of the sinner, he is considered just, or righteous, through the righteousness of his surety, and is consequently pronounced just, or righteous, in the sight of God. This is what constitutes the justification of a sinner. This is called by the Psalmist, (as he is quoted by St. Paul,) forgiveness, or rather remission, and covering, or hiding, or rather cancelling of sin. The Greek word, αφιημι, is generally used in the New Testament to signify that kind of pardon or remission of sin which takes place in justification; this word properly means to send back, and when applied to a debt, it means, to discount, cancel, or discharge, as well as to forgive; and this text might very well, and perhaps with more propriety, read thus: Blessed are they whose iniquities are cancelled, and whose sins are covered; to wit: with the atonement of Christ. This declaration of David is quite in point, and applies well to the case in hand; because it shows that the way that sinners are entitled to the blessing of God, is by imputing

to them the righteousness of the great atoning sacrifice of the cross, to cancel their debt, and cover their guilt, by a full satisfaction made by their surety, and not by any works of their own obedience to the law.

Dr. Scott, on these verses, has the following observations: "Not that forgiveness of sins is equivalent to justification." This is true on the principles I have stated above. But the doctor goes on to state his ground of distinction: "Which implies, (to wit: justification implies,) also, treating a man as righteous, and entitled to the reward of eternal life. For it is evident, in all human transactions, that the pardon of a criminal is a very distinct thing from giving him a title to a large estate."

The doctor is here evidently mistaken in the nature of justification. It is true that it is "treating a man as righteous;" but it is not true that it entitles a man to any special reward, any further than to give him the legal right of all innocent citizens to the common protection of the law, and to enjoy equal privileges with other innocent subjects. But it gives a man a title to no estate of any kind. Let us suppose three men brought before a court of justice; two of them are found guilty of breaking the law, and are condemned; the other is perfectly innocent, having duly obeyed the laws of his country. No criminality being proved against him, he is justified. But his justification, although founded on his own perfect obedience, entitles him to no estate; it only entitles him to the common liberties of innocent citizens.

Now, let us suppose that one of the condemned criminals renders penal satisfaction for his guilt, either by himself, or by his surety, for there is no difference in law which answers the penalty; then he is justified on his atonement. But this justification entitles him to no

estate, more than the other, but it does entitle him equally with the other, to the enjoyment of the common protection of the law, and gives him the common right of an innocent citizen. Again, let us suppose that the other criminal is pardoned generously. This pardon does not justify him, it only remits the punishment justly due to him—but it entitles him to equal privileges with the other two. But it entitles him to no estate.

Now we see that justification no more entitles a man to special privileges than pardon does, and that even justification, on the footing of perfect obedience to the law, has no tendency to give any claim to an estate, or to any thing but the common privileges of innocent citizens. Thus we see that the doctor's notion of justification is quite vague, and contrary to the common usages of mankind "in all human transactions." It is true as the doctor says, that "the pardon of a criminal is a very distinct thing from giving him a title to a large estate." But it is every whit as true that the justification of a righteous man no more gives him such a title than the pardon of a criminal does. The reason is plain; because even perfect righteousness gives no man a claim to special privileges—it only gives a common right to equal privileges with others. If a man wishes to obtain a special "title to a large estate," or any other special title, he must obtain it some other way than by *justification*—and some other way than by perfect obedience. A beggar may be as perfectly innocent, and as perfectly justified, as King David, or Solomon, but that will never entitle him to a crown.

But the doctor goes on, upon these futile and tottering principles: "But God always imputes righteousness where he does not impute sin; for none are pardoned except in virtue of their relation to Christ, by faith, and

if his atoning blood cover their sins, his righteousness also justifies their persons. As their surety, he suffered for their sins which were imputed to him, and they are rewarded, and made heirs of eternal life, because his righteousness is imputed to them."

Here the doctor makes a difference between not imputing sin and imputing righteousness, and between the atoning blood of Christ and his justifying righteousness, and between his suffering for our sins and his righteousness to give us a title to eternal life. If this theory be correct, the complete justification of a sinner consists in two things, to wit: the pardon of his sins, and his being acknowledged as being perfectly righteous, by perfectly obeying the precepts of the law. Moreover, as the sinner obtains both these from Christ, the righteousness of Christ, which is set to the sinner's account, must also consist of two things, to answer this double purpose in justification, to wit: his atonement on the cross, and his fulfilling the precepts of the law in his active obedience. His atonement, or passive obedience, is imputed to entitle us to pardon; and his active obedience, or his obedience to the precepts of the law, is imputed to entitle us to life eternal.

These principles can never stand the scrutiny of justice, or reason. For a sinner to be pardoned, and yet acknowledged as perfectly righteous by justice viewing him as having perfectly kept the law of God, is as palpable a contradiction, as to say that the law can view a person both innocent and guilty at the same time. It is plain that pardon supposes guilt, for pardon cannot exist where there is no guilt. But guilt supposes a transgression of the law, for guilt cannot exist where there is no transgression. But a transgression of the law cannot exist where perfect obedience is supposed. So that to make

our justification consist in the pardon of our sin, and, at the same time, in justice viewing us perfectly righteous, is such an absurdity that it never can stand a serious reflection.

And, also, the doctor's notion of atonement and righteousness, being two distinct things, is just as absurd as pardon and perfect obedience. It is said that Christ acted as our surety, or representative, both in his active and passive obedience to the law; that is, both in his life of holy obedience and in his dying on the cross, and that the merit of both is set to the believer's account for his justification.

Now, how will this theory stand the test of reason and justice? In the first place, Christ is supposed to fulfil the precepts of the law, perfectly, in the room of the sinner. Consequently all his obedience is to be set to the sinner's account; when, therefore, this most perfect obedience is considered as claimed by the sinner, the sinner must, of course, be considered as having perfect obedience, and, therefore, perfectly righteous; as having in his surety never violated the law of God, and must, of course, be justified by this perfect righteousness. All this is plain. Then the sinner, on this ground, must be considered as perfectly innocent, and without guilt, and not liable to condemnation. For although he had personally transgressed the law, yet his surety has obeyed it and procured a perfect righteousness for him, and, therefore, the law can never condemn him as guilty. If the judge had not admitted the surety, his obedience could not be imputed, but it is supposed that the surety is admitted, both in point of obedience and penalty. Then, the law must admit the imputation both of the surety's active and passive obedience. Therefore, the moment that the active obedience is considered as imputed, the sinner

must be considered by the law as clothed with a most perfect righteousness by actually obeying the precepts of the law in his surety, and consequently he cannot, in justice, be charged with guilt. Now it is also supposed that after Christ, as the sinner's surety, had wrought out a most perfect righteousness by a life of spotless holiness, or obedience to the precepts of the law, he came to the cross. Here, he is to die as a transgressor. He becomes guilty, and by that guiltiness he is liable to death: the penalty of breaking the law. But how can the law consider him guilty? He had none of his own, and the law, by admitting the imputation of his active obedience, has taken away all guilt from the sinner, so that no guilt could be found, unless the law could find a flaw in the obedience of Christ. But this is not supposed. There is, therefore, no guilt to be had. Consequently, Christ could not lawfully die, as he could not be legally counted guilty. But the surety did die. But what did he die for, and how did he die? Did he die for himself? No; he died for sinners, the just for the unjust. Was the guilt of his people imputed to him? Yes; "he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, and the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all. He made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us." (Is. liii. 5, 6. II. Cor. v. 21.) It, therefore, appears evident that, notwithstanding the most perfect obedience of Christ to the precepts of the law, his people, for whom he died, were considered by the law as guilty sinners, transgressors, and justly liable to condemnation. This being a notorious fact, it proves, beyond all contradiction, that the perfect obedience of Christ never was imputed to the sinner, because, for the complete obedience of Christ to the precepts of the divine law, to be set to the sinner's account, and the sinner, nevertheless, to be accounted by

the law as a transgressor, and liable to the penalty, is such a palpable absurdity and self-evident contradiction, and such a notorious violation of every principle of justice and law, that had the doctor only taken an honest view of its distorted front, he would have been convinced of the inconsistency of his idle theory of guilt, perfect obedience, pardon, and complete righteousness, all jumbled together, in our justification. Perfect active obedience, and suffering the penalty of transgressing the law, are as directly opposite to each other as righteousness and guilt. They never can be connected. Admit righteousness and there is no guilt. Admit guilt and there is no righteousness. Our justification, therefore, must depend either on Christ's active obedience to the precepts of the law, or on his passive obedience to its penal demands. But the Scriptures always mention the atonement, the death, the blood, the sufferings, to wit: the passive obedience of Christ as the only ground of our justification. Therefore the doctor's plan of atonement, and the perfect righteousness of Christ's active obedience, connected in our justifieation, is anti-scriptural and false.

The principal ground on which active obedience is supposed to be necessary to justification is, because it is set down as a self-evident principle that the law of God, in order to justification, requires not only a negative, but also a positive obedience. This has been taken for granted, without sufficient examination, and therefore it is said that the passive obedience of Christ, by entitling the sinner only to pardon, gives him only a negative righteousness, and leaves him destitute of a positive righteousness, which is thought necessary to entitle him to the favor of God, and give him a right to heaven. Therefore the active obedience of Christ is connected

with his atonement, to give the believer a right to eternal life after his redemption from death.

But this boasted maxim is not true, and it involves miserable absurdities, and if it were true I have already showed that active obedience cannot entitle to any special privilege, more than pardon can. The principle of justice is, that justification founded on active obedience to the moral law, can extend no farther than the present moment, and can last no longer than perfect obedience continues; and a perfect righteousnes can no more entitle to eternal life, than pardon or forgiveness can; and if we wish for a title to future happiness we cannot get it by law. Such a title the law cannot give, because the principle of law is *obey and live.* "The man who doeth them shall live in them." No title for futurity can be obtained any other way than by covenant, or contract. A man may do what he pleases with his own, provided he does no injury. Therefore, by covenant a man may obtain a title that may last for ever, on any condition agreed upon by the parties, and the law will guarantee the title to the benefit—provided the contract be mutual and fair—not on the value of the property, but on the agreement of the parties contracting. But justification on the principle of positive righteousness can claim no farther than obedience lasts, because the demand of the law is perpetual.

Had Adam not ate the forbidden fruit, he and his posterity would have been confirmed in a state of holiness and happiness for ever. But this title would not have been founded on his justification, because he was actually justified before he fell, on the principles of active obedience. But this justification neither entitled him to eternal life nor preserved him from ruin. But

had he fulfilled the condition of the covenant he would have gained his title to life; not by virtue of his obedience to the moral law, not by moral righteousness, but purely by grace; in consequence of his having not eaten of the tree in the midst of the garden.

Thus we have lost our title to life, not for the want of moral rectitude, or even a perfect justification, for we had all this in Adam before he fell, but because we broke covenant with God; therefore by the fall we have forfeited our title to eternal life.

In order, therefore, that we may have a title to life, we must be redeemed from the curse of the broken covenant, and also from the penalty of the law. To gain this important point Jesus made the atonement on the cross. This satisfaction takes away the forfeiture under which we are by sin, and makes it lawful for us to enter into a new covenant with God. Not that the atonement is actually applied to every man, but it makes it lawful for any man to whom the Gospel is proposed to believe. Were it not for the death of Christ the very proposal of life to sinners would be an unlawful thing, as it would be a violation of the penal demands of justice. But as the Gospel proposes a full atonement for sins that are past, it is no violation of the law either to propose life, or to accept of the proposal, as the law will be satisfied by accepting of the meritorious sacrifice of the cross. Thus the Apostle explains the matter in Rom. vii. 1–6.

When, therefore, a sinner has acquiesced in the proposal of the Gospel, he is considered as having made, by his surety, a full satisfaction to justice for all his transgressions, and is, therefore, justified as righteous, or innocent, in the view of the law. This justification renders the believer perfectly guiltless and innocent; and this claim to innocence must extend as far as the

virtue of the atonement extends. But the atonement is infinite, and extends to all the sins the believer ever has, or does commit; therefore, by this justification, the believer has a claim to eternal innocence and no guilt can ever be laid to his charge. But this is all the title he can possibly have, founded simply on his justification.

But we must remember that the believer has obtained this justification by his acquiescence in the covenant of grace, even by believing, and thus he becomes entitled to all the benefits proposed in the Gospel. But justification is only one of the benefits of this glorious covenant, and an acquiescence entitles to one benefit as well as another.

Now, what do the promises of this covenant engage? John v. 24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he who heareth my words and believeth, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Here we find that not only everlasting innocence, or freedom from guilt, but also eternal life is promised to the believer. Heb. viii. 10. "This is the covenant that I will make, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Here the believer's sanctification is engaged, by which he is delivered from the power of sin, and transformed into the holy image of God. This covenant also promises to the believer a glorious resurrection from the dead, and a seat at the right hand of the Judge, at the last day, and a glorious entrance into the heavenly kingdom, to be forever with the Lord.

Therefore the believer obtains his title to eternal life, to sanctification and happiness, by virtue of the covenant, in which the whole kingdom is engaged to him, as a generous gift from his heavenly father. This is the

account the Scripture gives of the matter. But there is no account of the active obedience of Christ imputed at all for any thing, or that Christ ever fulfilled the precepts of the law in the room of sinners, or that our claim to holiness, or heaven, or to everlasting life, is at all through the imputation of his active obedience.

Now, as to the notions on which the imputation of the active obedience of Christ is supposed to be founded, to wit, that the law requires a positive obedience to its precepts, as well as a negative obedience to its prohibitions in order to justification, we observe that this maxim is not true.

Adam was as perfectly justified the moment he was created, previous to his doing any act of obedience, as he ever was afterwards. Little infants, in the view of the laws of our country, are as perfectly justified as the most moral citizen in the land. Jesus was as perfectly innocent when he was an infant in Bethlehem, as he was when he stood before Pilate. An idiot is, in the eye of justice, as perfectly justified as ever Solomon was. Then it is not true that the law requires positive righteousness in order to justification. The truth is, *innocence*, which is to have no guilt, is the only ground of justification. Innocence will always justify, let it be possessed on what ground it may. Innocence can be obtained by any way that will either prevent, or remove guilt. Infancy, idiocy, obedience or suffering the legal penalty for disobedience, will all produce innocence, and will all be a proper ground of justification.

Positive righteousness can entitle to justification no otherwise than as it produces innocence. If positive righteousness, (which is active obedience to the precepts of the law,) be necessary to justification, then none can be justified but those who have actually performed the

duties required by the law; then how can infants and idiots be justified. It is admitted that infants and idiots are not capable of moral action, consequently they can not be proper subjects of law, and are incapable of sin, or duty. It is a self-evident maxim in justice, that a surety is not bound to do, and that he cannot do for the principal, what the principal is not legally bound to do in his own case. But infants and idiots are not bound to fulfill the law by active obedience; they are bound to passive obedience by the guilt of Adams sin being imputed to them; and, in this, Christ could be their surety; but as to active obedience he could not, because they are not themselves bound to obey. Therefore they must be justified by passive obedience, only. And if none can be justified but those who have a positive righteousness, then infants and idiots must universally be lost, because neither they, nor their surety, can perform that obedience.

Again, if positive righteousness be necessary to justification, or if it be a proper ground for justification, any further than it produces innocence, then some men are more justified than others, because some have more positive righteousness than others. Some men are placed in more important stations than others, and some live much longer than others—their obedience is, therefore, much more extensive. Some work but one hour, others bear the burden and heat of the day. Surely the Apostle Paul, who traveled among the Gentiles for upwards of twenty years preaching the Gospel and converting souls, who suffered so much persecution and at last shed his blood for the cause of Christ, would have more positive righteousness than a plow-boy, or a poor milk-maid, whose sphere of duty never extended beyond the farm, or the dairy; and consequently Paul's justifi-

cation must far exceed theirs. Thus, a youth whose sphere of duty has been very contracted, and who has been called off the stage before his moral powers were three days ripe for action, must have a very slim justification; while St. John, who lived a hundred years, and established the Christian Church long after the destruction of Jerusalem, wrote a history of the life of Christ, three epistles, and the book of Revelations, must almost be fit to dispute the priority with some of the lower classes of the angels in heaven.

How miserably absurd these things are, especially when it is admitted, on all hands, that there are no degrees in justification, and that even the thief on the cross was as completely justified as the Apostle Paul, who labored more than all the Apostles, and had the care of all the churches upon him.

But perhaps it will be objected to this that we are not justified by our own righteousness. But this makes no difference in the argument, for we are arguing on the nature of justification on the plan of *positive righteousness*, and the argument is the same, whether the righteousness be obtained by the principal or the surety. If positive righteousness be necessary to justification, it must be had some way, or damnation must be the consequence. And it is an invariable rule in law, that the obedience of the surety must keep pace with the duty of the principal. So that St. Paul must have derived from Christ much more positive righteousness than the poor plow-boy, or the milk-maid, because his duties and obligations were much more extensive than theirs, and consequently their justification, respectively, must be very different, as Paul's quantum of borrowed obedience was much more valuable than that of the others.

All these absurdities arise from that old established

maxim, *that the law requires both negative and positive righteousness, as necessary to justification.*

But, as I have already stated, *innocence* is the only ground of justification, and it always requires one of two things to produce it in a moral agent. One is not to disobey the law, the other is to suffer the penalty of the law in case of disobedience. Obedience is always required according to the extent of obligation which binds a man to duty, according to his circumstances. A owes obedience only as a common citizen; but B owes obedience as a citizen, a husband, a father, a master, and as a magistrate, or a governor, or as a christian, and a minister of the Gospel, &c. The simple obedience of A in his common sphere of life, perfectly justifies him as an innocent citizen, because he is thereby free from all guiltiness. B has to be very active and diligent to fill up his various and important duties, in his large sphere of action; but all his obedience in the view of the law, although he has done a thousand times more than A, only gives him the claim of *innocence*, and he is only justified, and is no more justified than A is, because he has no more innocence than he. Thus he who wrought but one hour, was equally approved with those who bore the burden and heat of the day, and he who had but two talents was adjudged good and faithful, as well as he who had five.

But if A and B both transgress, they both lose their innocence, and consequently are both condemned. And although there was no difference in their innocence, yet there is a wide difference in the aggravation of their guilt, and in the degree of their punishment; because guilt is always, more or less, in proportion to the obligation to duty, but innocence is not so, as it is only freedom from guilt. But now, when they have lost their

innocence, it is impossible for them to be justified until they obtain it again. But how is this to be effected? Not by active obedience; because future obedience can never make a man innocent who has broken a law; and hence the absurdity of the notion of Christ's active obedience being imputed for our justification. But the law requires a penalty in case of disobedience, proportional to the degree of criminality. They must, therefore, suffer the penalty prescribed by law. This is called passive obedience. When they have rendered passive obedience to the law, that compliance with the penal requisitions of justice, restores them again to a state of innocence, and by atonement they are as perfectly justified as ever they were—because the law has nothing against them as criminals.

This is as far as the laws of justice can go, either in case of obedience or disobedience—either as to a surety or principal. These principles of justice are so evident, that they are never disputed with respect to the laws and usages of civilized nations. But when they are applied to the laws of God, and the economy of the divine government, they are disputed, and denied, and perfect obedience and penalty for disobedience are connected together, and the holy and just law of God is supposed to acquire most perfect satisfaction for sin, and also most perfect obedience to the precepts of the law, in order to the justification of a sinner, directly contrary to every principle of justice among mankind. It behooves the abettors of the old notion of the vicarious, active, and passive obedience of Christ, to deny that justice is the same with God, as among men. Were they once to admit justice to be the same before God, as before a civil court, and by the laws of God, and the just laws of man, the dispute would soon be ended;

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every civilized mind would revolt in a moment at the idea of both active and passive obedience, as necessary to justification. No such case has ever been known, no such precedent has ever been given among men, who have pretended to justice.

But the great argument relied on is: human laws are imperfect, but the laws of God are infinitely perfect, and take cognizance of the heart, and, therefore, the divine law of God must not be compared to the weak and imperfect laws of man. But why is justice not the same in all just laws? Human laws are imperfect, indeed, and the divine law is most perfect and holy. But the perfection of God's law does not consist in being different from what is genuine justice among men, but in being free from the weaknesses of human laws, and in requiring perfection in those things in which human laws are correct; so that as far as human laws are right, and founded on justice, they are exactly coincident with the divine law. Therefore, as far as human laws are founded on equity, so far they are founded on the very same principles on which the law of God is founded, and what is just in the one, is just in the other; for it is impossible for genuine justice to be different from itself. Laws may be enacted by different legislators, and may be expressed and administered in different modes, but while ever they are founded on the same principle, and relate to the same subject, they must be the same in effect. There cannot, therefore, be any difference between human laws, and the divine law, as far as human laws are founded in justice.

Now, human laws never have required perfect obedience, and punishment both, in the case of a criminal; but have always admitted punishment, alone, as a sufficient satisfaction to justice, and have always acquitted

the criminal on his enduring the penalty. Then, let us inquire, is this right or wrong? Is it just or unjust? Surely it is right, for no just law could demand of a criminal, more than what is stated as the penalty for the offence, and after that is endured, no further satisfaction can, in justice, be demanded; and the criminal is completely justified, and entitled to all the common privileges of a citizen. Now, this is the voice of reason, justice, and common sense; and there is not a man under heaven, that we know of, who ever has disputed the justice and propriety of this rule in law; and there is not a man of sense to be found, who would not despise that law which would require obedience, and penalty, at once, in order to justify a criminal. It would be such a flagrant violation of every view that all men have of justice, that no judge would ever give such a judgment, unless he intended to make himself ridiculous.

And, now, must we suppose, that the divine law, because it is perfect, must require the surety of a sinner perfectly to obey the precepts of the law of God, to be imputed to him, and to make a perfect atonement for his crimes, to be imputed to him also! Would it be perfection to do what reason and common jurisprudence among men count absurd? And can that be a perfection in the divine law, which all wise and good men would despise and treat with contempt in civil society? Such are the absurdities attending the notion of the active and passive obedience of Christ, as necessary to the justification of a sinner; which is, indeed, a doctrine not once mentioned in the Scriptures, nor ever sanctioned by the divine authority of God.

LECTURE VI.

ROMANS IV. 9-25.

9. *Cometh* this blessedness, then, upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness."

The Apostle next proceeds to show, that the blessedness of justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ, was not to be confined to the Jews, who were called the circumcision, but that the uncircumcised Gentiles, also, were to be made partakers of the gracious blessing. In order to demonstrate this, he lays it down as a truth, that Abraham was justified in consequence of righteousness being imputed to him by faith. He then asks:

10. How was it then reckoned? When in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

As Abraham was justified when he was uncircumcised, it was evident that circumcision was not necessary to justification, as the Jews fondly imagined. And as Abraham, who was the father of the faithful, obtained acceptance with God, before he was circumcised, it was a token that the world of mankind in their natural state, without any previous preparation, or any thing to qualify, or fit them for the approbation of God, could obtain justification by faith only.

11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had*, *yet* being uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them who believe, though they be not circumcised—that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

12. And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the cir-

cumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which *he had*, being *yet* uncircumcised.

There is great accuracy, and fine ingenuity in this argument. The Jews fancied that circumcision recommended them to the favor of God, trusting to the outward sign, without paying any respect to the thing signified by it. But the Apostle, by the instance of Abraham, clearly demonstrated to them, that circumcision was not what recommended them to God, but righteousness imputed by faith; and that faith would always entitle a man to justification, let him be circumcised, or let him be of the seed of Abraham, or not. That the Gentiles, *by faith*, became the children of Abraham, and not by circumcision, or by lineal descent. Abraham departed from Haran in consequence of his having believed in God; and, therefore, he is to be considered as justified, when he left his native country. When he left Haran, he was seventy-five years old. (Gen. xii. 4.) But he was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised. (Gen. xvii. 24.) So that he was justified twenty-four years before he received the seal of circumcision; and, consequently, he was justified when he was in the rude state of heathenism. This plainly proves that *faith* is the only thing that is appointed as the condition of our justification; and that circumcision is, of itself, nothing, and intended only to be a seal to the believer, that he is justified by faith. If, therefore, a man be only a believer, he is justified—let him be circumcised or not; and if he be not a believer, his circumcision is nothing at all. Thus, the Gentiles, by faith, became the children of Abraham, although not circumcised, as Abraham himself was a believer, when he was without circumcision. And, also, the Jews, who believed, became his children,

by faith, because Abraham was circumcised as a believer; but if a circumcised Jew did not believe, he was not a covenant son of Abraham, although he had descended from him, and was circumcised like him, because he did not walk in faith as Abraham did. Thus, the Apostle clearly proves by Abraham, that the Gentiles without circumcision, had an equal claim, by faith, to justification with the Jews, seeing Abraham himself was justified when he was uncircumcised; and that the Jews must be believers, as Abraham was, before they could be counted his spiritual children.

The old objection, therefore, again returns. (Chap. iii. 1.) "What profit is in circumcision? The Apostle answers, that although it is nothing in point of justification, yet God saw fit to appoint it as a seal, or testimony to Abraham, and to all believers of the reality of their justification, according to the covenant of grace. He calls it a seal of the righteousness of faith, that is, a token of assurance given to the believer, that he is actually justified through the righteousness which is imputed to him, by faith. This is such an evident proof that this covenant made with Abraham was really the covenant of grace, and that circumcision was given to be a seal of that covenant, and that the infants of believers are acknowledged by God to be interested in it, and, consequently, that they have a right to the privileges of the church, that it is truly astonishing that the Baptists are not in a moment convinced of their error. It seems to make but little odds what the Scriptures say, when a man suffers himself, without thorough investigation, to adopt some doctrinal notion, whether right or wrong, true or false, the Scriptures may say what they will about it, still the doctrine *must be true*, though it

should contradict every thing the inspired writers have said. A *seal* is any visible token, stamp, or mark, set to any thing to attest its truth and reality. The righteousness of faith, is that righteousness through which a believer is justified. But that plan on which believers are justified through righteousness, which is imputed by faith, is *the covenant of grace;* that very same covenant by which a believer is justified to this day.

Now, the Apostle says expressly, and in words unequivocal, that circumcision was *a seal of the righteousness of faith,* then it must have been a seal, or attestation of the covenant of grace; and as it was applied to infants at eight days old, it proved that infants were interested in the gracious covenant of God, which he then confirmed by the seal of circumcision, and which he now confirms by baptism. When we put this sense on this text, every thing is plain and easy, the text is not tortured, or at all strained; the Apostle is left to speak his own simple language, and to convey his own ideas, according to the common meaning of his words, and behold he establishes the opinion that circumcision was a seal of the covenant of grace, attesting the truth of the believer's justification, by faith, through the righteousness of Christ. But the misfortune to the Baptists is, that this same circumcision, even this same seal of the righteousness of faith was applied to infants, attesting their interest in the covenant with their believing parent; and this entitled them to the ordinances and privileges of the church, and now circumcision is abrogated, and christian baptism is now become, by the appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ, the seal of the covenant to believers, in the room of circumcision; and, therefore, the privileges of believers in the christian church must be abridged, or infants must still be

admitted to have an interest in the covenant, and consequently to have a right to baptism.

But the Baptists may think as they please; they may distort texts as they please, and they may baptise as they please, they are no rule to us, nor we to them; but we know what the Apostle says, and we know what he means; and, therefore, we know that the Baptists, in refusing to admit the infants of believers to baptism, are wrong, and that they act contrary to the genuine intent and meaning of God in the covenant of grace with believers.

13. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

14. For if they who are of the law *be* heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.

15. Because the law worketh wrath.

The covenant which God made with Abraham constituted him heir, or proprietor of the world; not merely that he should possess the land of Canaan, as an inheritance for his posterity, for this was but a small clause of that covenant, but that he should be the rightful heir of all the nations of the earth. This is evidently the idea which the Apostle had of the nature and extent of this covenant. The Baptists would fain confine the blessings of this covenant to the promised land, and to the civil and external advantages which were granted to the Jews as a nation. Their great object is, to deny that the Jews were a church of Christ, constituted on the principles of the covenant of grace, and so deny that infants were ever admitted to be members of the church. But Paul had a very different view of the nature of the covenant made with Abraham. He affirms that Abraham was the heir of the whole world, and this inheritance was

granted to him and to his seed, not by the law, but by the righteousness of faith.

The sense is, Abraham was by this covenant constituted the father of all believers—of every land and nation on the face of the earth—so that he had the honor of claiming all believers, both of the Jews and Gentiles, as his children. Abraham is said to possess whatever his seed would possess. Thus the land of Canaan is said to be given to Abraham, although he, himself, never inherited a foot of it. (Acts, vii. 5.) So, also, in a spiritual sense, the nations of the earth are said to be his inheritance, because Christ, who, after the flesh, came out of his loins as his promised seed, possesses his church, composed of both Jew and Gentiles, and will, when the promise shall be completely accomplished, possess the whole world for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. (Psal. xxviii. and lx. 6—8; and lxxii. 8—11.) This was implied in this general promise:—"In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families and nations of the earth be blessed, and I will make thee a father of many nations." So, the covenant made with Abraham had a special view to Christ, as the Saviour of the world, and, consequently, was the covenant of grace.

The Apostle argues that the law of Moses—either the moral or ceremonial law—was not the foundation of this covenant granted to Abraham, but that he was thus blessed, purely because he believed in God, and was justified through the righteousness which was imputed by faith. *For if they* (v. 14) *become heirs by the law, faith has become void, and the promise is rendered useless.*

This, I conceive, is the proper rendering of the Greek in this verse, clearly arguing that if Abraham and his seed, become heirs of the blessings promised in the

covenant, through obedience to the law, it would change the ground on which those promises were made, as they were founded on Abraham's faith. Consequently, on this plan, faith would be made void, and, of course, the promise to the believer would become of no force. Not only so, but the fulfilment of the promise would be suspended on a condition which neither Abraham, nor any other man, could fulfill. The law is of perpetual obligation, and, therefore, can never be said to be fulfilled, in any given time, and no promise could ever be confirmed by a condition which is binding to-day, and to-morrow, and forever. Not only so, but even Abraham (although he may be allowed to be one of the best men on earth,) was himself a breaker of the law, and it is true of all men that they are sinners. Consequently, if obedience to the law had been the condition of the covenant, neither good Abraham, nor any other man, could have gained the least advantage from the promise.

The reason is plain, "the law worketh death;" that is, the law, as it is transgressed, can do nothing but sentence the criminal to suffer its penalty, and to place a broken law, as a ground of salvation, to a poor, wretched offender, would be only sporting with his misery, and such a plan would be entirely idle and nugatory.

15. But where no law is, there is *no* transgression.

The author has taken the liberty to divide the fifteenth verse, as he conceives the sense to be entirely lost by an unhappy connection of the two sentences of this verse together, and by beginning the last sentence with the causal conjunction *for*. It is already observed in Lect. III. chap ii. 25, that the Greek word γαρ often has the sense of the English word *now*. I have given it the disjunctive sense in this place, and rendered it by the

word, *but*, because it is evident to any sensible reader that the Apostle intended the last sentence to be an antithesis to the first, for no man can see any reason for the law's working wrath, because that where no law is, there is no transgression. Let us suppose a man, and a stone, as instances in the case. The stone has no law, and, therefore, has no transgression; but that can be no reason that the law worketh wrath towards the man; the only reason of wrath is, the man has transgressed the law. But let us suppose the man to have perfectly kept the law, it would still be true that the stone would have no transgression, because it had no law; but that would be no reason that the law should work wrath towards the innocent man. So we see that by a wrong translation of the little Greek word γαρ, every particle of sense is lost in this sentence, and although the sentence is a truth, yet the Apostle is made to give for a reason, that which is no reason at all for what he has said. The Apostle was a better reasoner than to commit such a palpable blunder as this. But here the Apostle begins a direct contrast to what he had proved wrong, and this sentence ought to begin the next verse. He had said that Abraham did not receive the promise by the law, and gave as a reason the impossibility of such a thing; because the law, as it was already transgressed, denounced a sentence of condemnation against him; but, says he, on the other hand, take away the law, and let it have nothing to do in the covenant, but let the promise rest purely on grace, by faith, and there can be no accusation, for no transgression can be opposed to faith, when the law is not concerned in the contract.

"But where the law is not, no trangression *can be.*" This is the literal sense of the Greek, and the law is elegantly laid aside out of the way of the promise, and the

covenant is confirmed on the pure principles of faith, with that force and elegance of reasoning which is so characteristic of the Apostle Paul.

16. Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might* be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.

The Apostle on this ground draws this conclusion, that because the condition, on which the inheritance was obtained was *faith*, therefore it was of graee, and God appointed faith to be the condition of the covenant, that the inheritance might be of grace, and not of works. For had obedience to the law been the ground on which the blessing was to be obtained, the inheritance must have been of debt, and not of grace; but God ordained faith to be the condition, that it might be of grace and not of debt; faith, without the deeds of the law, was appointed as the condition on which the blessing should depend, in order that the condition being performed by a single act, done in a moment of time, the covenant might be forever ratified, and the promise made sure to all the seed; that is, to every believer; not only to the believing Jews, but also to all, of every description, and of every nation, who, like Abraham, would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Answerable to this grand design, Abraham was, by the appointment of God, set forward as the father of all believers, both Jews and Gentiles.

17. (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed *even* God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were.

In Gen. xvii. 4, it is recorded that God appointed Abraham to be the father of many nations. This is not to be confined to his posterity, to the nation of Israel,

the Arabians, the descendants of Ishmael, or the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, but in a far more extensive sense comprehending all the believers in the world who are in the Scriptures counted his spiritual children.

Thus, Abraham was acknowledged as the father of all who believe; and he was appointed to be considered κατεναντι Θεϰ, as in the place of God, ϰ επιϛευσε, in whose promise he believed. He was a type of Christ who was the great head of the Church, who was able by the energy of his Gospel, to raise sinners to life, bringing them out of a state of death and ruin, and even to bring the Gentiles from a state of heathenism to be ingrafted into the Gospel church, and made children of Abraham and who, in his comprehensive view, according to his divine purpose, nominated those to be the spiritual seed of Abraham, who as yet were not in existence.

This was, indeed, a comprehensive view of that gracious covenant which God established with Abraham, the father of the faithful, extending the blessings of life and salvation to the ends of the earth; which will all come to pass according to his promise through his unchangeable faithfulness. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

18. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, so shall thy seed be.

Who against hope, in hope believed. That is Abraham believing the word of God had a confidence that his promise would be fulfilled, and that he would be the father of a numerous offspring, although, to human appearance, it seemed almost impossible for such a thing to come to pass. Abraham had no child till he was eighty-six years old, which was eleven years after the

promise was given to him that he should be the father of many nations; and he was still childless when God took him out, and renewed his covenant with him, and bid him look up toward the firmament and count the number of the stars, and said to him, "So shall thy seed be."

19. And being not weak in faith he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb.

20. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.

21. And being persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Here the Apostle gives a very striking view of the strength of Abraham's faith in the firm exercise of confidence in the promise of God. The first act of faith, by which Abraham acquiesced in the proposals of the covenant, was what justified him and entitled him to the promised blessing. But the confidence with which he rested on God's word was the proper exercise of that faith, by which he was at first justified, when he first believed in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

When Abraham first acquiesced in the call of God, and left his kindred and his father's house to sojourn in the land of promise, he was seventy-five years old. Sarah, his wife, was barren, and he was childless. (Gen. xii. 1–4.) About four years after that, God appeared again to him and renewed his covenant, promised him a numerous posterity, and gave him a grant for the whole land of Canaan. But still Abraham had no child. (Gen. xiii. 14–17.) About four years after this, God appeared the third time and renewed his covenant with him, and Abraham requested of God to let him know

how he would fulfill his promise, seeing he still continued childless, and a servant born in his house was his heir. But God told him that one out of his own bowels should be his heir. (Gen. xv. 1–6.) Abraham had then waited about eight years, depending on the promise of God, without any sign of its fulfillment. This must have been a great trial of his faith. But still he believed God, and rested with confidence in the promise.

Abraham waited two years longer, but no sign of any seed appearing, and he and Sarah were both getting old, he being eighty-five and she seventy-five years of age. To persons so far in the decline of life, every year's delay appeared to be an increased obstacle to the fulfillment of such a promise. As Sarah was not, as yet, mentioned in the promise, and she having been barren all her life, and now verging to that age and state when nature forbid her to bear children, she gave her maid, Hagar, to her husband to be his wife; and Abraham took her to his bosom, no doubt despairing of seed by his beloved wife, Sarah, and hoping that the promise would be fulfilled in his seed by Hagar. Commentators generally give us the idea that it was a wicked thing in Abraham to take Hagar to wife; but in this they have betrayed too great inattention to the nature of marriage and the laws by which God was pleased to govern his ancient people. (See lect. 50, vol. 1, on Matt. v. 31, 32, and xiv. 3, 9.) God was pleased to bless Abraham with an heir, out of his own bowels, by Hagar. Ishmael was born in the eighty-sixth year of Abraham's age, and no doubt he expected the promise to be fulfilled in him. (Gen. xvi. 1–4, 15, 16.)

Thirteen years after Ishmael was born, God appeared a fourth time to Abraham, and again renewed his covenant with him, and confirmed it by the seal of circumcision, (Gen. xvii. and xviii.) and also promised him a son

by Sarah; and shortly after Abraham had circumcised himself and his whole house, God again appeared to him, and confirmed his promise to Sarah. Abraham was ninety-nine years of age, and Sarah was eighty-nine, when this promise was made; and the sacred historian also adds, to make the fulfillment of this promise the more remarkable, "that it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of woman."

At length the seed is born with whom the promise was to be confirmed, even Isaac, the son of Sarah. Abraham was an hundred years old when Isaac was born, and it was twenty-five years from the time when the promise was made, to the time when the seed appeared, and nearly the half of the time Abraham was childless. In such circumstances, who can imagine the difficulties his faith had to encounter; yet he bore up, firm in his confidence, hoping against hope, as the Apostle observes, in the midst of discouragements. Thus he, in his unshaken confidence in God, gave great glory to his word, by resting assured that he was fully able to perform what he had promised. Christians ought to consider what an honor it is to God for them to trust to his unchangeable faithfulness, and how much they dishonor him by distrusting his promises.

22. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

This faith, by which Abraham at first acquiesced in the covenant, and which he so firmly exercised in confidence in God's promise, was the only condition, without the deeds of the law, on which the righteousness of Christ was imputed to him for justification; and therefore it is evident that he was not justified by any good deeds that he had done, but only by faith, through the imputed righteousness of Christ.

23. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead.

The circumstances of Abraham's justification were recorded, not merely as a historical fact, in which Abraham himself, alone, was interested, but as an example to us, and a testimony that we shall be justified on the same plan, if we will acquiesce in the proposals of God in the Gospel, who, by his divine power, raised up Jesus from the dead, as our Lord and Redeemer, whose righteousness will be imputed to all who believe on his name. To believe in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, is the same thing; for the blessings of the Gospel are proposed by Jesus Christ in a perfect consistency with the will of his Father; and faith is to acquiesce in the will of God, made known in the Gospel by Jesus Christ. Therefore Christ says, (John xii. 44,) "He who believeth on me, believeth not on me;" that is, not on me only, "but on him who sent me."

25. Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

Jesus, in order to procure a perfect righteousness for us, was, by his Father, freely delivered up to death, even the death of the cross; and in consequence of his having procured, by his death, our complete justification, he was raised from the dead, as a testimony of the full approbation of his Father to what he had done in the ransom of his people.

The preposition διὰ, is, unhapily, rendered by the English word *for*, in this verse. The English word *for*, generally alludes to the *end* or *design* for which anything is done; but the Greek word διὰ is mostly used to denote the reason why it is done: for instance, A pays a

sum of money for the ransom of B, and B is ransomed for money. In the first case the English word *for*, is proper; but in the last the Greek word διὰ is proper, and it signifies by, through, or in consequence of. This verse ought to be rendered thus: who was delivered upon the account of our offences, and was raised again in consequence of our justification. To say that Christ was raised for our justification, deceives the English reader, by inducing him to believe that the resurrection of Christ was the cause of our justification; whereas, the Apostle intended to give the direct opposite idea, to wit: that his having procured our justification, was the cause of his resurrection. For had he not completely satisfied justice by his death, the law would have held him fast under its penalty, but because he fully satisfied justice, therefore he was entitled to a glorious resurrection.

LECTURE VII.

ROMANS V. 1–21.

1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. By whom, also, we have access by faith into this grace, wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

The Apostle here draws two most important inferences from the doctrine he had now established, to wit: the doctrine of justification by faith, without the deeds of the law.

1. *We have peace with God.*

2. *We stand fast in the grace of the Gospel, rejoicing in the assurance of eternal glory, which God has promised to bestow on his people.*

1. We are reconciled to God, and partake of his love and friendship, in consequence of our justification by faith, the curse of the law being forever removed from us, by the imputation of the perfect righteousness of Christ. This is a glorious privilege, indeed, which the believer enjoys by the simple condition of faith, which he never could have obtained by the law.

2. The condition of the Gospel being faith, the believer, by an act of the mind, consenting to the covenant in one moment of time, forever confirms his title to the promise of eternal life, and he stands firm on the infallible ground of the Gospel, and rejoices in the blessed hope of future glory and happiness, which God, in cove-

nant compact, has promised to give him as his God, and his exceeding great reward. This the law never could have done, as its obligation is *ad infinitum*, (*eternal*,) and therefore, as a covenant condition, never could guarantee a future reward. But the condition of the covenant being faith, and faith being a single act of the mind, the believer, by giving his hearty consent to the covenant, eternally secures to himself the blessings promised; and his standing, although on the mere principles of *free grace*, is as secure as eternal and unchangeable truth and faithfulness can make it.

3. And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience;

4. And patience experience; and experience hope;

5. And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

The hope of believers is fixed on objects beyond the grave, although they rejoice in hope here in time, yet the ground of their rejoicing is the assured confidence they have of a happy immortality when time shall be no more. In this world they suffer tribulation, but such is the glory they have in prospect, that they are thereby enabled to rejoice in, and triumph over affliction and persecution, and even to count the trials and dangers they have to encounter as really profitable to their spiritual interest. The graces they possess are thereby set in motion, and they acquire strength by exercise. Christians knowing this, cheerfully forego all temporal advantages, and worldly interests and pleasures, for the sake of religion, and enter into the spiritual warfare with joy, being assured of final victory and a glorious reward in the end.

Tribulation, of whatever kind, cultivates patience, an humble and easy submission to the will of God, who has

promised to make all things work together for their good; and patience, under the various dispensations of God's providence, produces a rich experience, both of the faithfulness and care of God towards them, in upholding them in all their trials and troubles, and also of the exercise of grace in their own hearts; their faith, humility, sense of dependence, prayer, resignation, desire, love, &c. are drawn out by use, and give them a good acquaintance with God, and with themselves; and this improved experience in spiritual things—these frequent trials, so to speak, of the faithfulness of God, and the all-sufficiency of Divine grace—quickens, strengthens and confirms their hope, and they are enabled to rest with more confidence in Christ, and depend entirely upon Divine grace, according to the Gospel.

Moreover, this hope is not of such a nature as to produce shame or disgrace, either through the trivial nature of its object, or through any disappointment in obtaining it, because the believer, even now in his state of affliction, enjoys precious foretastes of his glorious inheritance, through the sanctifying influences of the spirit of God, giving him precious delight in God and manifestations of the love of God to his soul, which often affords him precious entertainment, which the world can neither give nor take away. These precious interviews which take place between the soul and God, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, serve as earnests or pledges of the believer's inheritance which he hopes hereafter to possess; and they evince the real presence and in-dwelling of the Spirit, who is sent into the hearts of God's children, crying Abba, Father. By this the hope of the believer is proved not to be a delusive dream, or an empty fancy, which will finally end in shame and disgrace, but a

grand and glorious reality, founded on the infallible *basis of the everlasting Gospel of Christ.*

6. For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

The Apostle now proceeds to show the infinite and boundless nature of the love of Christ, in dying for sinners. ετι γαρ, should be translated *moreover*, because the Apostle is beginning a new part of his subject, which makes the English particle *for* very improper, and, indeed, (as has been already observed,) the translators, by so uniformly rendering the word γαρ, by the English word *for*, even where no connection was intended, have, in many places, entirely confused the Apostle's arguments.

When we were without strength, weak, helpless, unable to rescue ourselves from the depth of ruin into which we were plunged by the fall;

In due time—when the proper time was come—according to the eternal council of God, when infinite wisdom saw it best for the ransom to be paid to divine justice,

Christ died for the ungodly; he offered up his life, or submitted to spiritual death on the cross, in the room of ungodly sinners. The sense of the Apostle is too weakly expressed by the English word *for;* the Greek word υπερ, properly signifies, *in stead of*, or *in the room of*, and evidently shows, that Christ died as a substitute, legally placed in the room of sinners, and actually endured what the law demanded in their case; he was counted guilty, as they were, their guilt being placed to his account, and he paid the penalty due for their sins.

He died for the *ungodly;* not for *holy, sanctified* persons, but for those who were *unholy*, far from God, and full of guilt and sin. So when the *ungodly* sinner, under a

sense of his *ungodliness*, and encouraged by the free offer of grace, believes, God justifies the *ungodly*. (Rom. iv. 5.) There can be no difference in the state of the sinner before God justifies him, and that in which he was when Christ died for him, only his faith, because the righteousness, must be applied to the person in the same state in which he was when it was procured for him, with only the difference necessarily made by the mere condition on which it was to be imputed, otherwise it would not suit the person. And the condition must not make the sinner godly, or it would disqualify him to receive that righteousness which was prepared *for the ungodly*. Faith is, therefore, nothing else but an ungodly sinner's coming to Christ, under a sense of his guilt, to receive his righteousness, freely offered in the Gospel to him, as an *ungodly sinner*.

7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die.

8. But God commendeth his love towards us; in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Here also the particle, γαρ, is improperly rendered, *for*. To give full energy to this text, it should be rendered thus: Now, scarcely would any one die in the room of a just man; but perhaps some one might even venture to die in the room of a good man. But God commendeth, or attests his love to us, because while we were yet sinners, Christ died in our stead.

Nothing can exceed the beauty or the force of this demonstration of the love of God to us guilty rebels. For any one to expose his own life, even for an innocent citizen, and die in his stead, would be counted a prodigy, and a very uncommon stretch of benevolence. And, indeed, there is only a bare possibility that any one could be found, who would die in the room of a man who

was not only a just man, but a man of great usefulness to his friends, his neighbors, and to his country, whose general benevolence and goodness to all around him would justly entitle him to the character of a *good man.* But how far is it from us to suppose, that any man would die in the room of a wicked reprobate, a rebel to his country, and an enemy to every thing that is good. But how astonishing is it, that God was pleased, of his own good will and boundless compassion, to give such a surprising proof of his love as he did, in sending his own Son to lay down his life for us, even while we were sinners, rebels, and enemies to his laws and government! Surely no tongue can describe, nor heart conceive the incomparable love of God to guilty sinners. And what can we return for such love as this? Surely all we can do, is to wonder at his goodness, and adore him for his love and mercy.

The sixth, seventh and eighth verses contain the most pointed and undeniable proof of the vicarious death of Christ that can be found in the New Testament. "In due time (says the Apostle,) Christ died υπερ ασεβων, *in the room, or stead of, the ungodly;* for scarcely will any one die, υπερ δικαιε, *in the room or stead of a righteous man;* yet, peradventure, υπερ αγαθε, *in the room or stead of a good man,* some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died, υπερ ημων, in our room, or stead." Socinians may quibble on the word υπερ as much as they please, and distort the meaning of the texts when it is used; but here is a text, in this seventh verse, that cannot be distorted; for what man under heaven would die for a good man, or for a righteous man, in any other sense than by giving his own life for his? or by redeeming the life of his friend by dying in his room? But it is evi-

dent, in these texts, that the Apostle states the death of Christ in this very sense as vicarious: he dying in the room of sinners, as one man would give his life to save the life of another. This is so evidently the true meaning of the Apostle, that it is impossible to understand the passage any other way. Therefore, the doctrine of Christ's dying in the room of sinners is unquestionably established.

9. Much more, then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

This argument is so perfectly conclusive, that it is impossible to withstand its force, and it in a very sovereign manner decides in favor of the permanent and infallible standing of believers. It cannot but be admitted that the greater, necessarily implies the less. And, to speak after the manner of men, it must have been a much greater thing for Jesus to redeem sinners, and to purchase salvation for them, than to apply the redemption to their souls. If sinners were reconciled to God by the atonement of Christ, when they were at enmity with him, and obnoxious to his frowns, how can it be supposed that he could reject them after they had obtained reconciliation? Surely if they obtained his love and friendship through the death of his dear Son, when they were enemies, there can be no danger of their ever being cast out now, when they are fully justified through the infinite merit of the cross Lastly, if the death, even the perfect atonement of Christ, has reinstated believers in the favor of God, how much more shall their eternal salvation be secured and effected by the intercession of Christ, who has risen from the dead, and is ascended on high, and

ever liveth to make intercession for them? And how can it ever be supposed that the intercession of Christ could ever prove ineffectual in behalf of his people, when he constantly pleads, in their behalf, the very atonement which first reconciled them to God, when they were enemies to him?

By such decisive arguments, the Apostle has most effectually demonstrated the impossibility of a believer's losing the favor of God, inasmuch as his standing is infallibly secured by the all-sufficient atonement, and the ever prevalent intercession of Christ.

I would further observe, that the Apostle is here treating of the solid foundation on which the believer is justified, and fully and completely saved. If, then, the active obedience which Christ rendered to the law, in his holy life, made any part of that righteousness which is imputed to the believer—as divines have so generally asserted—can it reasonably be supposed, that the Apostle would have omitted such an important article in the justification of a sinner, as this is generally supposed to be? No good reason can possibly be given for this omission except that the Apostle was of a very different opinion respecting Christ's active obedience. But it is plain that the whole drift of the Apostle's arguments asserts that our justification depends wholly and solely on the death of Christ, and if it be not so, the Apostle has certainly missed the full ground of our justification. Let divines, therefore, stop where the Apostle did, and say no more than he said, nor pretend to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, without any authority from the inspired writers.

11. And not only *so*, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he have now received the atonement.

The believer is not only perfectly secured in his in-

terest in the everlasting favor of God through the death and intercession of Christ, but he also rejoices in God, as his everlasting portion and inheritance, and the great source of all his happiness. This blessed inheritance he has obtained through his union with his Lord and Redeemer, through whom he has been made to partake of his everlasting love, through the great atonement of the cross, by which he has obtained, καταλλαγην, a change of his own condition, from his old state of enmity, to a state of permanent friendship, as an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.

12. Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men—for that all have sinned.

The Apostle, from this to the end of this chapter, evidently introduces and pursues a comparison between Adam and Christ; by which he intended to show that the salvation of believers through the imputed righteousness of Christ, was founded on a similar covenant plan to that by which mankind became sinners, so that the plan of justification by the imputed righteousness of one, who was constituted a covenant head, was as perfectly consistent as the condemnation of the human race, by the guilt of Adam imputed to his posterity. The wise and learned heathen philosophers strained all the powers of their mind to account for the universal depravity of mankind, in vain. But the Apostle, from the short statement of Moses, develops the whole secret; and evidently places Adam as the covenant head of his posterity, and imputes the criminality of his first sin to the whole human race.

Δια τουτο, says the Apostle. *In this manner*, the grace of God is conferred on believers, and they are made

righteous through Jesus Christ on a similar plan, as sin entered into the world by one man; and death was introduced by sin, as justification takes place, as to the believer, through the imputation of the righteousness of one man, to wit: Christ Jesus, και ουτως. And on this same ground, death came upon all men through Adam, in whom all have sinned, as the federal representative of all his posterity.

Here, it must be carefully noticed, that the sense of this, and the following verses, must be taken according to the natural connection of the whole chapter, and the strain of the general subject which the Apostle was treating. It is very evident, that according to the true sense of the Apostle's reasoning, none were interested in the covenant of grace, but believers; and in the first and second verses of this chapter, it is evident, that the Apostle spoke only of those who were justified by faith, and who were, by faith, interested in the grace of the Gospel; and it is especially stated in the seventeenth verse that they who receive the gift of righteousness are interested in the representation of Christ as their federal head and surety. Now, when the Apostle has so particularly stated the special character of those who are represented by Christ, and plainly spoken of them as believers, it is truly astonishing that so many have understood this passage as though the same number of mankind were represented by Christ, as was by Adam; when none but believers are spoken of as receiving any benefit from him, while all mankind are considered as fallen in Adam.

It is also to be noted that commentators have universally, as far as I have read, been entirely mistaken in the nature of the death which is spoken of in this passage; at least, they have confined the sense too much to

what is called *temporal death*. The truth is, the Apostle does not allude to temporal death at all, but spiritual death, which was the proper penalty of the broken covenant. The Scriptures have no where told us that temporal death is any part of the penalty of the law. Believers die, although they are perfectly free from the penalty, by the merits of Christ. And to say that Christ died a temporal death to redeem his people from that part of the penalty, and to say that believers are redeemed from it by the imputation of the death of their surety—and for believers to die, nevertheless, is the most palpable absurdity that can be conceived. Nothing is more certain than that the merits of Christ do actually redeem his people from the whole of the penalty of the broken law; and nothing is more certain than that belivers do die; therefore, nothing is more certain than that temporal death is no part of the penalty. We must grant this, or we must either say that this part of the merits of Christ is not imputed, or that it is of no account when it is imputed, because it is a fact that believers die, as well as other men, which would not be the case, if they were redeemed from temporal death.

Neither do the Scriptures say that the temporal death of Christ was any part of the atonement of the cross; but Christ, himself, asserts the contrary, by declaring the work to be finished, before he gave up the Ghost, (John xxix. 30,) which he could not have done, consistent with truth, if his dying a temporal death was a part of the atonement. And how palpably absurd it would be for the surety and the principal to die the same death. The truth is, if temporal death were a part of the penalty, the death of Christ would have redeemed believers from

it, or the death of every believer would prove, in fact, that the death of Christ was good for nothing.

It is evident that the Apostle did not allude to temporal, but spiritual death, from the seventeenth and twenty-first verses, where the death by Adam, and the life by Christ, are contrasted. If temporal death were meant in the one case, temporal life must be meant in the other, because it would be a great inconsistency to contrast temporal death with spiritual life. "If by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." It is evident that the life by Christ, here spoken of, is substituted in the place of the death by Adam, and the one takes place in the room of the other. But spiritual life is not introduced by Christ, in the room of temporal death, because believers who actually partake of spiritual life do, in fact, die, and spiritual life is no cure for temporal death. So that if the Apostle meant temporal death his argument is absurd, and not true, in fact, and his conclusion perfectly inconsistent.

But the Apostle was speaking of spiritual death, which came upon all mankind by Adam's fall, and spiritual life which was conferred on all believers, by Jesus Christ; and his argument is perfectly conclusive, as it is attested by matters of fact. Spiritual death consists in the withdrawment of the gracious influences of the Spirit from the soul, by which the mind is left in darkness. Spiritual life is the light of the Spirit in the mind, by which the soul is enabled to view the glory and excellence of the Deity, and the beauty of holiness, and

has a right understanding of that which is morally good. Adam died a spiritual death on the day he ate the forbidden fruit. The spirit of God forsook him, and he was left in darkness. And all his posterity whom he represented in the covenant, were reckoned guilty through the fall of Adam, their representative, and are, consequently, deserted by the Spirit of God, and their minds are blinded and their hearts are darkened, and they are naturally led off to sin continually. This is the awful death the Apostle is speaking of, as the direful consequence of Adam's transgression. This awful death, Jesus suffered on the cross when his Father forsook him, withdrew his Spirit from him, and left him to complain in darkness and desertion. But, by suffering this death, he endured the curse of the law: the penalty denounced in consequence of sin. Thus, he redeemed his people by suffering the penalty in their room as their surety; and, consequently, every believer is released from death, by the merit of the atonement, and the gracious influences of the Spirit are shed abroad in their hearts, and they are sanctified in their affections, and transformed into the image of God. Thus the Apostle, in Eph. iv. 17–19, represents sinners as walking, or living, in the vanity of their minds, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts. But believers, he represents as being led by the Spirit of God, and receiving light from Christ. (Rom. viii. 14; Eph. v. 14.) He says that they receive of God, through Christ, the Spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of himself—the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, &c. (Eph. i. 17, 18.) The Apostle, John, represents unbelievers as walking in darkness, but those who are interested in Christ as

walking, or living, in the light; (1 John i. 6, 7,) and Jesus said (John viii. 12,) that he was the light of the world, and that he who followed, or believed on him should not walk in darkness, but should have the light of life. Compared with 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18; and iv. 3–6.

On these Scriptural principles it is easy to account for the universal depravity of mankind, and the corruption of the human heart, and also to explain the manner in which our natures are renewed and our hearts changed from sin to holiness. Infants are born under the curse of a broken covenant, through the representation of Adam; therefore the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit are all forfeited, and they grow up in spiritual darkness, and are led off from God by ten thousand temptations; and as soon as they are capable of moral action they commit sin, and pollute their souls with moral evil. But when a sinner becomes free from the penalty of the law, by faith in Christ, this forfeiture is removed, and the light of the Spirit is let into the soul, and the man gets a view of the glory of God and the excellence of holiness, and is captivated and changed into the image of God. Thus he is renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, in consequence of his interest in Christ, by faith, on the proper principles of the Gospel. But temporal death has no more to do in all this than temporal life has, and to introduce it into this passage is doing violent injustice to the Apostle, and prostituting the sense of this important Scripture to the mere gratification of our own whimsical humors.

Commentators have uniformly introduced the death of infants, in this passage, as an argument for the doctrine of original sin. But the Apostle had no such idea. Truly, they might as well have introduced the death of young kids and lambs, or of the whelps and cubs of bears and

wolves, as the death of infants. Serpents and falcons devour the innocent nestlings of birds, and the large fish of the sea devour the smaller ones by thousands, but does this prove original sin? Not only man, but also all the beasts of the field, die a temporal death. How, then, can it be conclusively argued from the death of infants that they are guilty. That the guilt of Adam is imputed to infants is true, and abundantly proved in the Scriptures, but their dying a temporal death is no proof of it unless we also admit that even the brutal creation are also guilty.

It is true the whole creation belonging to this world suffers the consequences of the fall. Even the inanimate parts of the world, as well as all living creatures, undergo many evils, which follow as an effect of man's apostacy. God has seen fit to adopt a certain economy among his fallen creatures, suited to promote his glory, which, no doubt, is very different from that economy which would have been proper for a state of innocence. But there is a great difference betwen a *consequence* and a *penalty*. A penalty is the proper requisition of the law, which it demands as satisfaction to justice for transgression. But many consequences and effects may follow this penalty, which may be determined by the wisdom and prudence of the judge, or by the mere circumstances of the case, which by no means go up into the penalty, or make any part of the satisfaction due to justice. For instance, a man may be condemned to death, and if he were immediately executed the law would be fully satisfied. But the judge, for the sake of convenience, or for any prudential reasons, may appoint him to lie in prison so many days before he orders him out, to suffer the penalty. During which time of confinement he may suffer many hardships, pains and distresses by cold or heat, hunger

or thirst—his limbs may be tortured with irons, and his mind may be distracted with cares and fears. He may have to endure a separation from his family and friends, and suffer the contempt of his fellow-citizens. But none of these things, however painful they may be, make any part of the penalty of the law; and if the criminal should at last make his escape, all the hardships he had suffered in prison would not have the least effect as to satisfying the demands of justice. Thus God is pleased to order a painful regimen, in consequence of the fall of Adam, so that every part of the creation, according to its nature and circumstances, suffers the effects of man's condemnation. The fields produce briars and thorns, the waters are frozen to ice, or agitated with storms and tempests, the forest is infested with prowling beasts of prey, the innocent lamb is devoured by the rapacious wolf, and the bleating fawn by the fierce tiger, or the roaring lion. Sickness, pain, poverty and death all conspire to render us miserable in this world, because God has seen it best that this terrible dispensation should take place in a fallen world; and both saint and sinner, believer and unbeliever, redeemed and unredeemed, all share alike, without distinction. But this economy was adopted by infinite wisdom in consequence of the fall, as the most suitable dispensation, but not as any part of the penalty of the broken law.

Now, to say that the pains and death of infants prove them to be guilty of original sin, is just as good reasoning as to affirm that a brute animal is guilty of sin, because it suffers; or that an oak is guilty, because it is torn with a stroke of lightning; or that Mount Ætna or Vesuvius is guilty, because their bowels are consumed by flames of fire.

But it is thought that the Apostle alluded to infants

as guilty of original sin, when he spoke of death reigning from Adam to Moses, even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. The argument is, that temporal death is meant as a penalty of the broken covenant, and that children died before Moses gave forth the moral law on Mount Sinai; therefore the death of children who were not guilty of actual sin, proves them to be under the penalty of the covenant and guilty by the imputation of Adam's sin. But this is a palpable sophism; first, the proposition is denied, to wit, that temporal death is a part of the penalty; for the death of believers proves this to be false and absurd. Secondly, the Apostle neither said nor meant infants exclusively, by those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; but those who died spiritually, and over whom blindness and wickedness reigned even before the moral law was given by Moses. There is no likeness between the transgression of a moral law and transgressing a covenant as a federal head. Every man transgresses the law personally for himself, and none others are concerned with him in his criminality. But Adam sinned as the head of a covenant, and his whole posterity were concerned with him in the consequences of his crime; so that there was a vast disparity between Adam's first sin and the sin of any other man, and no man, by breaking the moral law, ever sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, because every man sins for himself only, but Adam sinned for us all.

13. For until the law, sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses: even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him who was to come.

It is evident that the Apostle here intended to show that there must have been some other law, beside the moral law, which was given to the Jews at Mount Sinai, which involved mankind, universally, in a state of spiritual death. He states it, as a fact, that mankind were universally dead in sin, ever since the days of Adam, to the time of Moses. This being a fact denied by none, he argued that there must, of course, be some law which imputed criminality to them, because where there is no law of any kind, no criminality could be reckoned. But there was no law given to mankind which was publicly proclaimed, except the covenant made with Adam, until the law was given by Moses; yet blindness of mind, ignorance of God, and, consequently, all kinds of wickedness prevailed in the world for upwards of two thousand years from Adam to Moses, and the whole world of sinners had been destroyed by the flood, except Noah and his children, as a special evidence of the universal depravity of the human race, when God declared that Noah was the only just man on the face of the earth, (and the Apostle says, Heb. xi. 7, that he was justified by faith.) These, the Apostle observed, had not sinned, as Adam had—against a positive covenant precept, as federal representatives—yet they were all swallowed up in a deluge of death and wretchedness, as by one general sentence of condemnation passed upon them, which involved the whole in the same state of guilt and misery. This plainly proved that the moral law, as delivered by Moses, (which, indeed, was only given to a few comparatively,) could never be the cause of such an universal catastrophe, and as this general death began with Adam and continued, without intermission, till the time of Moses, when the written law was given to Israel, and also ever since,

both among Jews and Gentiles, (excepting only what reformation has been made by divine grace on the plan of the Gospel,) it must be plain that this awful guilt originated with Adam, the father of the human race, in consequence of his being constituted the head and representative of his posterity.

Thus it evidently appears that Adam was a type, or figure of Christ, who, according to the infinite depth of divine wisdom, was to come after him, as the head of a new covenant and representative of his spiritual seed. Adam and Christ are both compared and contrasted together; they were contrasted as Adam broke his covenant and Christ perfectly fulfilled his; and as Adam brought guilt and ruin on his seed, and Christ a perfect righteousness and salvation on his. But Adam was a proper type, or resemblance of Christ, as he was constituted a covenant head to his natural offspring, as Christ was also the head and representative of his spiritual seed, whom his Father gave him to redeem; and as Adam's posterity, whom he represented, partook of the fatal effects of his fall, and as those who were represented by Christ, partake of the happy advantages of his most perfect righteousness imputed to them. Inasmuch as the Apostle affirms that Adam was a type of Christ, and runs a parallel between them as both being public persons, and inasmuch as it is abundantly evident from the testimony of the Scriptures, that Christ was constituted the head of a covenant, it is plain from this passage that Adam was also a covenant head and representative of his posterity, and that God did really make a covenant with him as such. And unless we understand the Apostle as stating such a covenant made with Adam, there can be no sense in this passage, or any force in this part of the Apostles reasoning.

It is necessary further to observe, that when God gave the written law to the children of Israel, at Mount Horeb, or Sinai, (Exod. xix. and xx. Deut. v.) he connected it with the judicial laws, and the ritual of Moses, and constituted the whole as the condition of a national covenant; in which he engaged to bless them as a nation, and as his peculiar chosen people, on condition that they would walk in his statutes, and keep his commandments. But it must be remembered, that this national covenant with Israel, was quite distinct from the spiritual part of the covenant made with Abraham, which God founded on the condition of faith, and confirmed by the seal of circumcision. This covenant was of a national kind, and related to the temporal blessings and benefits to be conferred on them as a community, on condition of their obedience to the laws and statutes which God saw fit to ordain. But this covenant was not a confirming covenant, and consequently had no confirming seal; because the condition, being a perpetual law, could never be fulfilled; and, therefore, the nation enjoyed the blessings no longer than their obedience ensured the divine favor. The Jewish fathers in this national covenant performed their obedience to God, both for themselves and their children; not relative to the salvation of their souls, but as their children made a part of the nation, they had to partake of the national blessings, or judgments, according as their parents were obedient, or disobedient, to the ordinances of God. Hence, it appears, that after the law was given by Moses, the children of Israel when they broke the condition of the national covenant, were properly said to sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression; for they broke covenant with God, as Adam did, and as they involved their children in judgments and afflic-

tions, as Adam had his. This is the evident meaning of the second commandment, which is to be considered in a national sense, which made idolatry to entail the judgments of God upon the children, unto the third and fourth, to wit, to many generations, except repentance prevented. Thus, the Apostle, instead of alluding to infants, alludes to the general state of mankind who had sinned, not by breaking any specific covenant with God, as Adam had—which was the case with mankind in general till the days of Moses, when God was pleased to enter into a national covenant with Israel. This proved that the universal depravity of mankind was not in consequence of the law of Moses, which, indeed, affected but a very small part of mankind, nor could it be by the moral law as a general rule of life, as that had but an individual effect on the personal transgressor only, and had no tendency to involve others in the same state of criminality. But it was necessary to find some general cause which produced such a general effect, as appeared in the universal depravity of the human heart; and the Apostle could find no cause, but the transgression of Adam, as a federal head, breaking covenant with God, and involving the whole human race in death and ruin, under the penalty. Here seems a clear and easy solution of the whole matter, which, on any other plan, would be an inexplicable mystery.

15. But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For, if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and this gift by grace *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

16. And not as *it was* by one who sinned, *so is* the gift. For the judgment was by one to condemnation; but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification.

I have already observed in lect. 27, vol. 2, John xii.

27, that the sense of some texts is quite altered by pointing the sentences wrong. Punctuation was not in use for many years after the Scriptures were written, and the translators pointed the sentences as they understood them. But sometimes they had wrong ideas, and therefore, the punctuation is sometimes wrong, and the true sense entirely changed. The first sentence in each of these two verses, is neither good English, nor when connected with the other parts of the texts, do they convey any clear idea. The author cannot make any sense out of them as they stand; and, therefore, begs leave to translate and point them, as follows:

[15. But is not the free gift even so, as *was* the offence? For if by the offence of one, many died, much more the grace of God and the free gift hath abounded unto many, through the grace of one man, *even* Jesus Christ.

16. And is not the free gift *by one*, as *the judgment was* by one who sinned? For the judgment *was* by one, to condemnation, and the free gift *is* unto justification from many offences.]

It is evident that the word ϗκ is a contraction for ϗκι, as the next word begins with a vowel; ϗκ ωϛ, for better sound's sake instead of ϗκι ωϛ, and this throws the sentence into the form of an interrogation. The design of the Apostle was to run a parallel between Adam and Christ as being both public persons, placed at the head of a covenant party, and those whom they respectively represented, receiving the advantage and disadvantage of their respective representations; Adam's posterity was condemned by his transgression, and the spiritual seed of Christ are justified by his obedience to the requisitions of divine justice. Thus, the condemnation of the sinner, as a child of Adam, was on the same covenant principles, as the justification of a believer, to wit: by the imputation of the guilt of the one, and of the righteousness of the other.

17. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one, much more they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

18. Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men to justification of life.

The Apostle insists still upon the justification of believers, on similar grounds to that on which the posterity of Adam were condemned. It is to be observed, that those only who, by an act of faith, receive the gift of righteousness, are justified, and entitled to life, by Jesus Christ. As the condemnation descended to all the posterity of Adam, begotten by natural generation, so all are entitled to justification who consent to receive the righteousness proposed in the Gospel, and none but believers have any part in the representation of Christ.

19. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

In consequence of Adam's transgression, or his eating the forbidden fruit, many, even all his posterity, descending from him by natural generation, were legally constituted sinners, according to the terms of the covenant; so, also, by Christ's fulfilling the condition of the covenant of redemption, by complying with the requisitions of the law, and rendering full satisfaction to justice by the death of the cross; many, even all who receive his righteousness, (v. 17,) and by faith are interested in his atonement, are legally constituted righteous in the sight of God, according to the nature of the covenant of grace.

It is not a little surprising that divines, resting on this text as their main support, can affirm so confidently, and contend so earnestly, that the active obedience of Christ makes a principal part of his righteousness which is imputed to believers for their justification. If

the imputation of active and passive obedience were consistent with reason, law, or justice; or if the apostles of Christ, who treated the doctrine of justification as the only foundation of the christian's hope, had stated the active obedience of Christ as a principal part of our righteousness, they would have been justifiable in construing this text as a proof of their doctrine. But when the bare word, *obedience*, in this text, is the special ground on which this doctrine is supported, and the doctrine itself absurd in its nature, and not to be found in the Scriptures, the bare word, *obedience*, is a very far-fetched and strained proof of this favorite point. It is very certain, that the word, *disobedience*, used here by the Apostle, means whatever Adam did in transgressing the covenant. And if we can pay any respect to what Moses has written, we must believe that this disobedience was simply Adam's eating the forbidden fruit. Now, it must, also, be evident that the word, obedience, means whatever Christ did in fulfilling the condition of the covenant of redemption. And if we pay any respect to what Paul has written, we must believe this to be Christ's dying on the cross. This is what Christ and his apostles have always stated as the sole ground of our justification, and, therefore, this is what Paul meant by the obedience of Christ, if we consider him as stating the same ground as he had done before in his arguments, or as he did afterwards in the subsequent part of his epistle. By critical examination, we find that he has stated the ground of our justification in Chap. iii. 21, 22, by the word, *righteousness*. In verse 24, by the word, *redemption*. In verse 25, by the word *propitiation*. In Chap. iv. 24, 25, by the phrase, *raised from the dead, being delivered for our offences*. In Chap. v. 6, *Christ died to save the ungodly*. In verse 8, *Christ died for us*.

In verse 9, *justified by his blood.* In verse 10, *reconciled by the death of his son, and saved by his life,* or living intercession. In verse 11, *atonement.* In verses 17, 18, *righteousness.* In verse 19, *obedience.* In verses 20, 21, *grace and righteousness.* In Chap. vi. 3 to 5, *death.* In verse 6, *crucified with him.* In verses 7 to 11, *dead, died.* In Chap. vii. 4, the body of Christ. In Chap. viii. 2, *the law of the Spirit of life.* In verse 3, *for sin,* or by a sacrifice, or atonement. In verse 10, *sin,* or *atonement, righteousness.* In verse 34, *Christ who died.* In Chap. ix. 30, 31, *righteousness.* In Chap. x. 3–6, *righteousness.* In Chap. xiv. 9, *died, rose, and revived.* In verse 15, *for whom Christ died.* These are all the texts in this epistle where the Apostle has pointed out the special grounds of our justification, and every one knows that in this epistle, he treated the doctrine of justification as his professed subject. Why, then, I ask, did he not state the active obedience of Christ as an especial ground of the believer's acceptance with God? And why did he confine himself, as with special design, to the atonement? Truly, the only reason that can be given is, because the active obedience is no part of the righteousness to be imputed, or we are sure that the Apostle, as an accurate writer, as a good reasoner, and as a good divine, would have stated it. But we are left to understand it merely from the single word, *obedience!* And then we are to understand this word as meaning *active obedience,* which the Apostle states in this verse as the only ground of our righteousness, which contradicts all that he has said in this whole epistle on the subject, both before and after. To add the word, *active,* to the word, *obedience,* is begging the question, and gives our own idea, and not the Apostle's. The Apostle used the word, υπακοης, which is derived from the verb, υπακουω;

and some argue from this word, that the Apostle meant active obedience to the precepts of the law, alleging that this word has that proper meaning. That υπακοης, or υπακσω, signifies obedience to the precepts of law, none will dispute, when the sense of the passage requires or admits of it. But it will also mean submission to the penalty of a law, as well as obedience to its precepts. The word, literally, signifies, *to hear attentively.* If a master commands his servant to do anything, the servant hears the command, and does what he is directed to do; he then does what this word means in that particular case. If his master forbids him to do anything, and he abstains from it, he does also in this case what this word signifies, he hears attentively, and conducts accordingly. And if the servant should transgress, and his master should call him to submit to the penalty due for his disobedience, when the servant would submit to the law of his master, and receive the punishment; in this case, he would also, and equally as in the other case, do what υπακοης naturally means, he would hear and submit to the requisitions of his master. Every good Grecian knows this, and how useless is it to argue from the mere signification of this word, when its meaning must be determined by the circumstances of the case, and according to the nature of the obedience required. The question is, in order to determine the meaning of this word, what kind of obedience the law required of Jesus, as our surety. If obedience to its precepts, the word means active obedience; if the law required the penalty for our disobedience, then the word means passive obedience. Now, it is evident that the law required the penalty; and there is no place in all the Bible that gives the least idea that Christ was required to fulfill the precepts of the law, as our surety;

Therefore from the nature of the case, and from the nature of the obedience, that the Scriptures evidently say the law required of Christ as our surety, it is plain that the Apostle by this word meant *passive*, and not *active* obedience.

Thus it appears that this text, notwithstanding the great stress laid on it, as a proof for the imputation of Christ's active obedience, of itself proves nothing at all in the argument, and when considered in connection with the general statement of the Scriptures on the subject, it proves in favor of the imputation of Christ's passive obedience only.

20. Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

The Apostle, having showed that the law of Moses neither introduced sin into the world nor produced a sufficient righteousness for our justification, here gave a short hint as to the reasons why the law was introduced, and what end it was calculated to answer, which he more fully explains in the seventh chapter. The first sentence of this verse is not translated to the best advantage. The words, in English, are calculated to give the idea that the law was introduced, that by it sin might become more prevalent, and that mankind might become more wicked, which is not an easy or a handsome idea of the law, or of the economy of our benevolent Creator. The verb πλεοναση will not only signify *to abound*, but also, and very properly, *to fulfill*, or *to complete*, and the sentence would be more properly rendered, *moreover the law was introduced likewise that the fallen state* OF MAN *might be fully evinced.* This I take to be the meaning of the Apostle. If God had not given a declaration of his will, the world would have been destitute, in a great degree, of one of the most powerful motives to embrace the Gos-

pel. The fall, it is true, would have left mankind in a deplorable state of ignorance and depravity, but they would, in a great degree, have been ignorant of their miserable and sinful state, and the dismal effects of the universal depravity of the human race would have been unknown, comparatively, as it was in fact with the heathen nations. But in consequence of a revelation of the divine will, pointing out our duty, we discover the deplorable aversion of our hearts from God and holiness, and are made sensible of the wretched state in which we are involved by Adam's transgression. The offence of Adam is fully evinced and clearly shown in all its malignant nature and direful consequences by the revelation of the holy will of God. Thus the Apostle says, "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came sin revived, and I died." (Chap. vii.)

But God did not intend, by giving the law, merely to give his fallen, miserable creatures a view of the wretchedness of their state, but that they might be warned to flee from the wrath to come, and accept of the grace of the Gospel, so that by an interest in Jesus Christ they might experience the superabundance of divine grace in redeeming them from all their sin and misery, counteracting the effects of the fall, and restoring to them spiritual life, through Jesus Christ.

21. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Gospel reveals to us the remedy which God has provided for fallen sinners, which, taken in connection with the whole view that the Scriptures give of the divine will, shows us that although sin has reigned in consequence of the fall of Adam over his unhappy posterity, yet with respect to all who, by faith, become inter-

ested in Jesus, the divine grace of the Gospel through the imputed righteousness of Christ, reigns with a sovereign effect to recover them from a state of spiritual death to the life of holiness, and finally to bring them to the happy enjoyment of God to all eternity. Thus, though we are made wretched and miserable by the fall of Adam, yet, by the intervention of the Lord Jesus Christ, as our adorable mediator and surety, we have a blessed opportunity of recovering from our fall, and obtaining a full and complete redemption from our lost and ruined state, through the great atonement of the cross. Miserable are they, and miserable must they be, for ever, who live and die under the guilt of sin and the condemnation of the law; but blessed are they who, by faith, obtain redemption through Jesus Christ, our adorable Redeemer.

LECTURE VIII.

ROMANS VI. 1-11.

1. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?

The greatest and most plausible objection that ever has or ever can be brought against the doctrine of justification by faith, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, is, that it tends to encourage sin, and indulge a sinner in carelessness as to the duties of the moral law. The argument is this: if we are justified by free grace, independent of any good works of our own; and if nothing that we can do can be brought into the account in our justification, and if we have to depend entirely upon the merits of Christ, the Gospel can afford us no motives to obedience to the moral law, and it does not matter how wicked we are, seeing we have to depend on the righteousness of another, without any regard to any duties of our own. It is alleged that this encourages licentiousness, sloth, and indulgence in iniquity.

The Apostle, sensible of the apparent weight of this objection, brings it forward and answers it in this chapter. The author of these lectures is indeed unhappy to state that he cannot conincide with the universal opinion and sentiments of divines and commentators on the passage now under consideration. The leading ideas we get, from the elaborated explanations of commentators on this passage are these: that believers are dead to

sin; that is, sin is mortified in them; that they feel themselves under obligations to God, by their baptismal vows, to live as becomes those who are redeemed by the merits of Christ; and that a sense of gratitude and love to their generous Redeemer influences them to fight against sin, and to live to the glory of God; and in consequence of regeneration (as it is called) they feel their hearts disposed to wage war against every corruption, and to maintain and pursue a steady course of piety and religion. This is, indeed, a very religious way of talking, and is, in fact, true, in a degree, as to the proper effects of the Gospel on every believer. But, at last, this is only begging the question, and does not answer the objection.

The objection denies that the Gospel has this effect, and alleges that, instead of having a tendency to mortify sin, it encourages it, and lulls the believer in carnal security; so that, to bring forward such arguments as these, however good and pious they are, is nothing to the point, and is nothing but darkening counsel by a multiplicity of words without knowledge, and leaves the objection standing untouched, in full force, against the Gospel. I would be very sorry if I thought the Apostle had no better arguments to offer against this gigantic objection. But he takes very different ground, and completely oversets this slanderous calumny against the Gospel, by solid arguments, that are founded on the very nature of the Gospel, as we shall see as we examine the texts now under consideration.

2. God forbid. How shall we, who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

(Greek.) We who are dead to sin, (or by a sacrifice for sin,) how shall we afterwards live in it? It is evident that the word αμαρτια is often used to signify a sacrifice

for sin. (See Rom. viii. 32; 2 Cor. v. 15, and Heb. xiii. 11.) The Apostle first expresses his abhorrence of the thought that believers should indulge themselves in sin, because they are saved by free grace. God forbid! said he. This cannot be the case. Let it not be said that such a thing could be. He then proceeded immediately to show the impossibility of such an absurd consequence, and that the very nature of the plan of the Gospel tended directly and effectually to prevent sin from reigning in the believer.

How shall we, says he, who, by our union with Christ, are considered as having died for our sins, live afterwards under its power and dominion? Every believer is, in the eye of the law, and justice of God, viewed as having done what Christ did in his room; so that all believers, being represented by Christ, their surety, are considered as vicariously having died on the cross when Christ died. When Christ hung on the cross he suffered all the horrors of spiritual death, he endured the withdrawment of the divine glory, and was deserted by God, his Father, and left in a state of moral darkness. This was the penalty of the broken law: "In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die." Christ, suffering this penalty, made a full atonement for sin, and redeemed his people from the curse of the law; and by the application of this atonement all believers are delivered from spiritual death, are constituted righteous in the sight of God, and have a covenant claim to all the communications of the Holy Spirit, necessary for their complete deliverance from sin.

This is the radical ground of the Gospel, and ought to be well understood. Every intelligent creature acts by motives, and always acts according to the most prevailing motives. If a man always had presented to his

mind a sufficiency of motives to that which is morally good, he would always do that which is good. But if these motives to good be withdrawn, and motives to evil presented to his mind, he would always do that which is evil. God only can illuminate the mind, and give us sufficient motives to that which is spiritually good. Adam, in Paradise, before he fell, enjoyed this divine illumination, and, consequently, was possessed of a holy disposition of heart. But by eating the forbidden fruit he broke covenant with God, forfeited his right to communion and fellowship with him, and fell under the penalty of the broken covenant. This penalty was *death*. Spiritual death is not an alienation of heart from God, and a propensity to evil, as divines have always thought, but a withdrawment of spiritual light from the soul, by which the soul is left in a deplorable state of moral darkness, destitute of sufficient motives to that which is right, and surrounded with motives to evil. The necessary and inevitable consequence of which will ever be, the soul of the wretched, deserted creature becomes disposed to evil, and alienated from God and holiness.

Now, as Adam represented the whole human race in the covenant which he broke, his posterity legally fall under this awful penalty, and are born into the world spiritually dead; blind to that which is good; and consequently, as soon as grown to years capable of moral action, they, without a single exception, are prone to do evil. This is the woful state of the human race. In this woful state, under this forfeiture, bound by this penalty of the law, every individual of the race of man must lie, unless redeemed by Christ, who suffered the penalty in the room of his people.

On this plan it is easy to see, that as soon as a man believes on Christ he is, by law, accounted as having endured the penalty, inasmuch as the death of Christ is

placed to his account, and he is considered as having done what Christ, his surety, has done for him, Thus the penalty of the broken law being removed, and the forfeiture nullified, the poor, benighted, fallen creature, in consequence of his union with Christ, by faith, is restored not only to the favor of God, but also to the enjoyment of the influences of the Spirit of God. The divine illuminating Spirit takes the possession of the heart, and the believer is furnished with divine motives to that which is morally excellent, so that he is habitually inclined, and in his heart disposed, to love God and keep his commandments.

The above statement is of so much importance, and so necessary to the right understanding of this, and many other passages of Scripture, that the reader had better make himself master of it before he reads any further.

On this ground the Apostle says, with his usual strength of reasoning—"We who are dead to sin, how shall we afterwards live in it?" As though he should say, before a man believes in Christ, he is held fast under the penalty of the law, and the enlightening influences of the Spirit of God are all interdicted, as forfeited by the sentence of death. It is, therefore, impossible, on the principles of law and justice, for the unbeliever to get grace to dispose him to live holy. But, on the other hand, the believer is *dead to sin*, that is, he has died in Christ, his surety; he is legally viewed as doing what his surety did for him. Christ, his surety, died to sin, (verse 10,) that is, he died as a sacrifice for sin; therefore, the believer is now considered, in Christ, as having made a full atonement for all his guilt, and is, of course, delivered from spiritual death; and is no longer held under the penalty of the law, and the Holy Spirit, with his sanctifying grace, takes the possession of his heart,

enlightens his mind, and disposes him to love God and holiness, and to walk in holy obedience to the divine will. How, then, the Apostle asks, can he, after this, continue to live in sin, when he is redeemed from spiritual death, and is under the constant influence of divine grace, and the guidance and government of the Spirit of Christ in his heart? Thus the Gospel is so far from indulging sin, that it is the only antidote against it, and is the only plan on which a fallen sinner can be sanctified.

3. Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?

Every believer has a right to be baptized, as an acknowledgment that he is interested in the death of Christ, and his baptism is a seal, or token, of that interest. It is true that too many who are admitted to baptism are not true believers, as Simon Magus; but the proper idea of baptism is, that it is a sign or testimony that the person baptized is a believer, and by faith interested in the death of the cross. The Apostle, therefore, called the Romans to remember that the very profession they made, when they were baptized, was a testimony of their interest in the death of their glorious surety, and that they were delivered from the forfeiture of the broken law, and interested in the blessings of the covenant of grace.

4. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.

The Baptists consider this as an allusion to the mode of baptism, and this allusion they take as a proof in favor of immersion. Well, be it so; we admit that immersion is one mode of baptism, probably practised by the Apostles, and it may be that the Apostle did allude to it. But this will only prove that immersion is one mode of baptizing. But this the Pedo-Baptists never denied. The wrath of God poured out upon the Lord Jesus Christ, he calls a baptism wherewith he was to be baptized. (Luke xii. 50.)

This was spoken in allusion to the mode of baptism, as much as the other. If so, the mode alluded to is pouring out. The descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, is called baptism, (Acts i. 5,) and Peter calls this descending of the Holy Ghost, *pouring out* and *shedding forth*, or pouring forth: (the word for both is the same in Greek. Acts ii. 17, 18 and 33.) Peter also calls the Spirit poured out, or falling on Cornelius, baptism. (Acts xi. 15–17.) Therefore, we have as good a right to say, that these texts allude to the mode of baptism, as the Baptists have to say, that being buried with Christ in baptism does. They are all called baptism; and one represents baptism by *immersion*, and the others by *pouring* and *falling upon*. Admitting that the mode is alluded to, then we have two modes alluded to, one by *immersion* and the other by *pouring*, and very probably the Apostles used both; and this is exactly what we plead for, viz: that there is no one particular mode pointed out, more than another, and the church is left at liberty to baptize in whatever mode she may judge most convenient. But to return to the Apostle's argument. The word συνεταφημεν is, indeed, the word generally used to signify to bury, in union with another person, in the first person, plural number Yet, the verb βαπτω comes from the verb τιθημι, which is derived from θεω, or θω, which signifies *to put*, place, or set anything in a fixed position. This sentence might be truly translated thus: "Therefore, by baptism, we are placed with Christ into *his* death." And the true sense is, we, as believers, are united to Christ in his death, legally placed with him, as our surety, in the atonement he has made for us, and this union with him is obtained by faith, which is made known by our being baptized in his name. Thus, the evident idea is, that when a sinner

believes, his faith, which is attested by his baptism, unites him to Christ, and he, as a believer, is considered one with his surety, and as having died, because his surety died in his room.

4. That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Christ died two deaths, a spiritual death, and what is commonly called a temporal death. His soul died, and his body died. He also had two resurrections, his soul rose from a state of spiritual death by the return of divine light, after he had suffered the withdrawment of his Father's glory; and after he was buried, in due time his body rose triumphantly from the tomb. The penalty which Christ paid was spiritual death; and nothing that Christ did was vicarious, or in the room of sinners, but his dying spiritually. His resurrection was not vicarious, but only a glorious consequence of his having vanquished death, that is, when he had suffered enough to satisfy divine justice, the divine glory of his Father, which had forsaken him, returned, which raised him from his awful state of spiritual death, and he again enjoyed spiritual life, in the full and ineffable light of the divine glory of God.

We are to notice that the Apostle in this chapter is not speaking of the resurrection of the body either of Christ or the believer; but he was levelling his arguments against the objection which related to the believers sanctification in this life. And his argument is, that as Christ overcame spiritual death by suffering it, or dying, so the believer is liberated from spiritual death by dying vicariously in his glorious surety, and consequently as the glory of God was again revealed to the soul of Christ, after he had, by his all atoning sufferings answered the penalty of the law and satisfied justice,

and thus restored him to spiritual life again; so also the believer, being considered as having fully atoned for all his guilt by the death of his surety, is raised, as Christ was, to spiritual life, by the return of the divine glory of God to his soul. Therefore as Christ could not be held any longer under the power of the penal law, but was completely delivered from any further demands, when he had endured all its penal requisitions, so the believer by the imputation of the atonement of the cross, is completely emancipated from the penalty of death, and is raised to the enjoyment of spiritual life. How, then, is it possible, on any just principles, for a believer, thus liberated and saved by free grace, by the death of Christ, to live any longer, or afterwards to be held as a prisoner under the power of sin. The same glory of God which raised Christ to spiritual life, will raise the believer also, and dispose and enable him to walk or habitually to live in newness of life. The Apostle affirms that this consequence must and will necessarily follow.

5. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also, *in the likeness of his* resurrection.

The Greek is very bold and expressive. Ει γαρ συμφυτοι γεγοναμεν τω ομοιωματι τς θανατου, &c. If we have become united as twins, together, by a similarity or union of his death, we shall be also in the unity or similiarity of his resurrection. And the sense is: if we are united to Christ by faith, we are one with him in his death, and all the benefits of his death being placed to our account, we shall also rise to spiritual life, as he did, by the communications of the divine glory of God to our souls.

6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

By the old man, the Apostle means our representation by Adam, who was our first covenant head. The word παλαιος will signify former, or first, as well as old. This, our original state, by the fall of Adam, our former representative, is done away by the crucifixion of Christ; he having thereby paid the penalty incurred by the fall. In consequence of which the whole body of sin is destroyed, viz: the very root from which it springs, and the source from which it proceeds, and the radical body from which it flows, to wit: that awful moral darkness under the curse of spiritual death. This miserable state has evanished, so that what the Apostle said is true as to every believer, (Eph. v. 8,) "ye were once darkness; but now are ye light in the Lord." Therefore the believer being disentangled and set at liberty from the curse, is no longer held as a slave to sin; but enjoys the liberty of the people of God.

7. For he who is dead is freed from sin.

That is, he is set at liberty by justification, The believer is justified, (δεδικαιωται) because he is considered as having suffered in his surety, the death denounced against him as the penalty of the broken law; he is, therefore, free from the dominion of sin, and has the liberty of claiming and enjoying the light of the glory of God, uniformly to engage his heart in the duties of religion. In order to live, we must die in Christ. We must be interested in the death of Christ, or we never can enjoy the light of life. He that believeth in Christ is dead with Christ, and is risen with him. But he that believeth not, is held under the bands of death; he owes death to the law and justice of God. So that an unbeliever never can do a spiritually good thing. Therefore it plainly appears that the plan of justification by

free grace is so far from causing us to live in sin, that it is the only thing that can make us holy and keep us from sin, and it is evident that every unjustified sinner does nothing but sin continually and never can be delivered from it but by becoming interested in the death of Christ by faith.

8. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.

9. Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

The Apostle having shown that the death of Christ is the only ground not only of a believer's justification, but of his sanctification also, now proceeds to prove, or rather demonstrate, that the believer never will, or can fall finally from a state of grace, but that his sanctification will be maintained as a consequence of the infinite merit of the one offering of Christ. If we be dead with Christ, says he, we are firmly persuaded of the truth of it, that we will not only, at first, be made spiritually alive with him, but we will continue to live as he does, constantly enjoying spiritual communications from him, to maintain and support the life of godliness in our souls.

When Jesus, our adorable surety, had said, "it is finished," and had once borne the penalty of the law, and got a release from death, and the penal justice of God, as having completed the work of redemption, he dieth no more; death can never have dominion over him again; the penalty of the law can never fall on him again; because he, by one offering, hath for ever perfected the atonement, and consequently purchased a perfect redemption for those who shall ever be interested in him. He, therefore, lives forever, and because he lives, all they shall live also, who believe in his name. His prevalent intercession will forever maintain their just and equitable

claim to the divine influences of the Holy Spirit to bring them, in due time, to a perfect conformity to the holy will of God.

10. For in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Divines have universally, in their explanation of this passage, given us the idea that *to die to sin* is to mortify sin in our hearts, to have our hearts renewed to holiness, and our lusts and corruptions subdued. But this tenth verse might long ago have convinced them of the glaring impropriety of such a construction. Here we find that the Apostle makes use of the identical same words applied to Christ when he died for our sins on the cross. Surely, then, it is plain that the phrase, to die unto sin, does not mean to have sin mortified in our hearts, to have our corrupt desires and propensities subdued. For if *we* have need to have sin mortified *in us*, Christ *could not*, for he had no sin in his heart. But it is true that Christ did die unto sin, once; and it is equally true that the believer dies unto sin. Commentators tell us well enough how Christ died unto sin, viz: dying as a sacrifice, or an atonement for sin. This is true, for there was no other way in which he could die unto sin, but as an atonement. But Christ did not make atonement for his own sins, for he had none. He must, therefore, die as a surety, under the imputation of the sins of his people. Divines agree to all this. But are not believers one with Christ in the eye of the law? And does not the law consider them as having done what Christ their surety did in their room? Therefore they are considered as dead, and dead with Christ, (verses 7, 8.) Thus it is plain that the believer dies to sin, in the same sense that Christ died to sin, not by mortification, but by way

of atonement. It is true the believer does not atone for his sins in his own person, but in the person of his surety.

In civil courts of justice, suretyship is a common thing. One man becomes surety for another, and the civil law always considers the principal as having a legal right to avail himself of the benefit of all that his surety does for him, as they are always considered one in law. We are well acquainted with these things, and they are familiar to us. Inasmuch, then, as the law of God has admitted of a surety, we are obliged to consider Christ the surety, and the believer, as one in law, and what Christ has done, the believer has legally done. But Christ has died unto sin, that is, he died as an atonement for sin; thus the believer who is one with him, has died unto sin, in the same sense as his surety did. And on this very idea the whole of the Apostle's argument depends.

Christ died unto sin once, and but once; and he liveth unto God; he lives for ever in the favor of God, his father, who is well pleased with the atonement which he has made, and he will never die any more, for by his one atonement he hath made full satisfaction to justice for all our sins.

11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead, indeed, unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Inasmuch as Jesus Christ died once, and can never die but once, and after his death, lives forever in union with God, his father; so the believer, having once died, in his surety, and made a full atonement for all his sins, and is completely delivered from the penalty of the law, and entitled to the constant communications of the Holy Spirit, he ought always to account himself as having

his spiritual and eternal life secured to him through Christ his Lord and Saviour. It is impossible for him again to fall under the curse of the law, or under the bondage of sin. He can die again no more than Christ can; because, as Christ is his surety, if the believer should ever fall under the penalty of the law again, his surety would have to die for him again. But Christ dieth no more, because his dying once is sufficient. Therefore, because Christ liveth never more to die, the believer shall live also. And not only shall he live in a state of justification, but also he shall enjoy spiritual life, which is a life of communion and fellowship with God.

We, therefore, see that the plan of the Gospel is far from encouraging sin; but, on the contrary, it guarantees both our justification and sanctification. The Gospel not only engages us to act from every principal of love and gratitude to our gracious Lord and Redeemer, who has given his life for us, but it insures every grace of the Spirit to renew our hearts, more and more, and to lead and guide us in the path of virtue and religion—to work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, and finally to bring us to a perfect conformity to the holy will of God, and to the enjoyment of him, forever. See 2 Cor. v. 14, 15, 17; Gal. ii. 20, and Col. iii. 1–4.

LECTURE IX.

ROMANS VI. 12–23, AND VII. 1–6.

12. Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13. Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin. But yield yourselves unto God, as those who are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

The arguments which the Apostle had advanced, in defence of the doctrine of free grace, are well calculated to give firm and solid ground to hope and look for all necessary communications of grace, to assist us in the discharge of the various duties of religion. On this ground the Apostle proceeded to exhort and encourage the believers at Rome to persevere in the ways of godliness. It is the lot of Christians, while they are here in a state of mortality, to be imperfect in holiness, and while they live in mortal bodies, they have to fight and struggle against corruption, "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that they cannot do the things that they would." Therefore it is our duty to fight against sin, not with a view to maintain our state of justification, but to further our sanctification. Our justification is forever secured by our death in Christ; but our sanctification is wrought in us by the energy of divine grace, and we are called to employ our minds and our bodies in obedience to God's commands. Therefore, the Apostle directs us to stand in opposition

to every sin, and not to suffer it in any shape to rule over us, while we live in this, our mortal state, nor yield to our evil propensities, nor to the allurements of the world, or the temptations of Satan And although we are imperfect in all we do, and are often assailed, and too often foiled by temptations, yet let us rally our force and maintain a habitual stand against the dominion of sin, and not yield to our corruptions, and suffer them to have dominion over us. And although we have cause daily to mourn over our short-comings, yet, when we come to yield up our mortal bodies, let death find us fighting like valiant soldiers in the cause of God, and God will crown us with a glorious victory.

We are exhorted not to yield, or employ the members of our mortal bodies, as instruments, or weapons, or organs to serve the purposes of sin, and unrighteousness, in our life and conversation; but to devote ourselves to the service of God, as persons redeemed from death and made spiritually alive; as raised from a state of spiritual death by the virtue of our surety's righteousness. In this new state of life, we ought to employ the members of our bodies, our feet, hands, tongues, eyes, ears, &c. in the service of our gracious God and Redeemer, to do those things which are well pleasing in his sight. Thus it is the Christian's duty to employ his whole mind and body in God's service, that he may act for his glory, and that he may further the cause of religion in his own soul, and in the church, that he may be instrumental in his own growth in sanctification, and in the furtherance of the cause of Christ in the church, and in the world.

14. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for (because) ye are not under the law, but under grace.

This is indeed a most precious promise, made to all

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of sin, but ye have from your hearts yielded to that plan of doctrine to which we were surrendered.

believers, without exception. The Spirit of God says to every one who is in Christ, "Ye are not under the law, but under grace, therefore sin shall not have dominion over you." That is, the believer is no longer under the penalty of the law, but is redeemed from it, by the death of his surety, consequently he shall never come under its forfeiture, and therefore, he shall by the divine illumination of the Spirit, be forever preserved from spiritual death, and although he may be imperfect in holiness during his mortal state here, yet he shall never fall under the reigning power of sin, but shall finally be more than a conqueror through Jesus Christ who has loved him, and given himself for him. The word grace, here means, the Gospel, and is set in opposition to the broken law, or the covenant which was broken by Adam, (Titus ii. 11.)

15. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness?

The Apostle having fully overthrown the objection, on the solid ground of the believer's being delivered from the power of the law, by his interest in the Gospel, brings forward the objection again, by way of appeal to the sense of his readers. What think you now, as though he should say, can this objection lie against the doctrine of free grace founded on the great atonement of the cross? God forbid. It never can be. But if any man should act on the plan of this objection, and profess to have an interest in the death of Christ, and indulge himself in the habitual gratification of sin, hoping to be redeemed by free grace, he only proves that he never had an interest in Christ. Because, if he were really

dead in Christ, he, of course, would also rise with him, he would live under the influence of spiritual life, and sin would not have dominion over him ; the sanctifying influences of the Spirit would purify his heart, and he would hate sin, and love God, and holiness, and uniformly endeavor to keep his commandments.

The Apostle appealed to their own common sense to decide the matter. Do you not know, says he, that a man is the servant of that master whom he obeys? It is true a man may do a turn, now and then, for another, yet not be accounted his servant. But if he yields a steady servitude to him, that man whom he serves, is certainly his master. Now, to apply this self-evident principle to the subject in hand, it is plain that if a man lives habitually in the practice of sin, allowedly, and with the approbation of his heart, he is the servant of sin, (John viii. 34–36,) and proves that he is still held under the penalty of the law, and under the sentence of death, and has no spiritual life in him. But if, on the other hand, he be actuated by principles of obedience to the will of God, he is under the illumination of the divine Spirit, and is the subject of spiritual life ; which proves that he is, indeed, a believer, justified by the righteousness of Christ, and consequently he is influenced by righteous principles to walk in the ways of holiness.

17. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed, from the heart, that form of doctrine which was deliv ered you.

This text would be more grammatically and better translated thus :

But, thanks be to God, because you were the servants of sin, but ye have from your hearts yielded to that plan of doctrine to which we were surrendered.

The Apostle expressed his thankfulness to God, that although the Roman converts had formerly been held under the bonds of the broken law, which exacted death as its inexorable penalty, yet now they were delivered from the power of sin, in consequence of their having heartily consented to the plan of the Gospel, on which ground they were constituted christians, and modelled according to the system of divine grace, which is the only plan on which a sinner can be delivered from death and sin.

18. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

The believer, in consequence of his being emancipated from the penal demands of the law, by the effects of the Gospel becomes the servant of righteousness, that is, he, by the sanctifying grace of the Gospel, becomes obedient to the holy commandments of God, and obtains grace to dispose and enable him to walk in the way of duty.

19. I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members, servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

The Apostle observed, that he did not merely dictate with apostolic authority, but argued the matter by human reason, addressed to their human understandings, so that they who had to struggle with weaknesses and imperfections, while they lived in the flesh, might be the better fortified and encouraged in their duty, when they would not only have the Apostle's authority for the truth of these things, but, from his arguments on the subject, could also see the reasonableness and propriety of them. For how reasonable it is that we who had

formerly, when living in a natural state, yielded ourselves, even all the powers of our souls, and the members of our bodies to the baseness of sin, and had run into one sin after another, until we were become vile and abominable in the sight of God, should now, after we are delivered from our wretched state by nature, employ all our powers in the service of God, in obedience to his righteous commands, that we by the sanctification of the Spirit may become holy, and without blame before him in love.

20. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21. What fruit had ye, then, in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.

As long as a sinner is under the dominion of sin, and not delivered from his natural state by faith in Christ, he is *free from righteousness*; that is, he is destitute of righteousness; he is not interested in the atonement, and, of course, he is not renewed to holiness. The Apostle asks, what real advantage the Roman converts had ever received from all those evil dispositions and practices which they were guilty of during the time of their alienation from God. So far were they from receiving any benefit from these things, that their hearts, now in their renewed state, abhorred them, and the recollection filled them with shame and contrition; and, indeed, it is an awful and solemn truth, that to continue in a state of nature, under the curse of the law and under the power of darkness, will, unquestionably, lead down to the chambers of death and end in eternal ruin.

22. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

But the believer is made free from the penalty due to

sin, which is death, through his surety's death in his room; and, as a consequence of this, he is also free from the reigning power of sin. He is renewed in his heart, and although he is imperfect in this life, yet he is sanctified, and habitually lives under the influence of the divine Spirit, which will carry on the work of grace until it finally issues in eternal life and glory.

23. For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Greek word οφωνια is used to signify wages, or that which a man earns by his labor, because the wages of a laborer is commonly laid out for provisions to support him, but the literal meaning of it is meat, food, or any kind of provision which we take for our support. The simple sense is, the sinner gets death for his wages—he earns death by his labor. Hard work, indeed! and miserable wages! But were we to admit the literal idea, it would be *the sinner feeds on death!* Or, sin feeds the sinner on death! Oh who can conceive of the madness and folly of sinners? Death, temporal, spiritual and eternal is their portion.

But not so with the believer, for the gift, or the grace of God, the blessings of the Gospel, graciously bestowed, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is eternal life. Spiritual life to be continued forever, a full discharge from death, the penalty of the law, a deliverance from the power of the grave, and eternal glory in heaven.

CHAP. VII. 1—Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them who know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as *it* liveth.

That the Roman converts might more clearly understand the justice and propriety of the believer's happy transition from under the law into the Gospel, the

Apostle introduced a similitude, by reference to the law of marriage among the Jews. Some of the Roman converts were Jews and proselytes, and probably the more sensible part of the Gentile converts were, by that time, pretty well read in the law of Moses. To the sensible part of the church he appeals—who were acquainted with the law, relative to marriage. They knew that a law would hold a man under obligations as long as it was in force. Some laws die by being repealed, other laws die as to individual persons, in consequence of certain relations and circumstances ceasing to exist, on which the obligation ceases. For instance, our law binds a man to do military duty from the age of eighteen to the age of forty-five, after which time the obligation of the law becomes dead. The moral law forbids a man to kill; but a man may be providentially brought into such circumstances, that he may be in duty bound to preserve his own life by taking the life of a bloody assassin; or, he may be justly called to defend his country. In such cases the obligation of law ceases, and the man may, and ought to kill, in defence of himself, or his country.

It is, indeed, astonishing that the translators supplied the pronoun *he*, and not the pronoun *it*, in the last sentence of this verse: "The law hath dominion over a man as long as *he* (to wit, the man,) liveth," instead of "as long as *it* (to wit, the law,) liveth," or is in force. It is evident that the Apostle introduces a case in which the woman out-lives the law, and is supposed to be still alive after the law of marriage had ceased, or was dead as to her, in her state of widowhood. Such an inaccuracy as this is almost unpardonable.

2. For a woman who hath an husband, is bouud by the law of *her* husband, so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.

3. So, then, if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.

Among the many instances which might have been chosen as a simile, the Apostle brought in that of a married woman, which was, indeed, the most suitable one he could have chosen, and throws great light on the subject. He had said "that the law had dominion over a man," &c. The Greek word ανθρωπος, is common gender, and means either a male or a female; and if the translators had used the word person, instead of the word man, it would have suited the scope of the passage much better, as a female was the person intended, and not a a male; and the English word, man, is never used to mean a female; but the Greek word means either a man or a woman.

The case is very clearly stated: a woman who was married, is here stated to be bound to her husband, by the law, as long as he lived; so that if, while her husband was living, she be married to another, she would, by divine authority, (which is the sense of the word χρυματισει,) be adjudged to be an adulteress. But if her husband were dead, she would be free from her legal obligations to him, and it would be lawful for her to be married to another man.

4. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are dead to the law, by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

The Apostle meant the death, or the atonement of Christ, by the body of Christ. Christ suffered in his human nature, which consisted of soul and body, and the Scriptures often speak of the sufferings of Christ, as done in his body. His body was the only visible object presented to our sight, and we could take cognizance of

nothing else, by our bodily senses, although the radical sufferings of Christ, in bearing the penalty of the law, was in his soul; yet he was in the body when he suffered, and the sufferings of his soul could not be seen. But the man Christ Jesus could be seen in his suffering attitude, as his body was visible, and, therefore, the apostles could bear witness to the suffering Saviour, as he was exhibited before their eyes. Hence it is that the Scriptures often speak of the body of Christ, when his death is meant. See Matt. xxvi. 26, 1 Cor. x. 16, and xi. 29, 1 Pet. ii. 24.

The believer is here represented as dead to the law, by the death of Christ; that is, the law is dead to him; its penal obligation becomes extinct, it being fully satisfied by the death of the cross. This plainly shows that, until a sinner is, by faith, united to Christ, the law of God has as firm a hold on him, and as inviolably binds him to spiritual death, which is its penalty, as the law of marriage binds a married woman to her husband, while he is living. But a sinner—and blessed be God that we can say *any sinner*—is at liberty to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, because Jesus has opened the way through which the penal demands of the law can be fully satisfied, and the guilty sinner released from death.

Similes are not to be applied in every minute circumstance, but only the leading features are to be brought in as an elucidation of the subject in hand. The design of this simile is to show that the union of the believer to Christ is legal, and founded on the proper principles of strict justice. God would no more save a guilty sinner by mere absolute mercy, independent of the legal demands of the broken law, than a married woman could, with impunity, elope from her lawful husband and marry another man. But if the penalty of the law can be satisfied, it dies, of course, by losing is penal claim. In

that case, the sinner is no more bound to fulfil the judicial sentence of the law, than a woman is bound to a deceased husband; and his union with Christ, on this ground, is as consistent with justice, as it is for a woman, whose husband is dead, to be married to another man.

It is impossible for a married woman, *lawfully*, to get free from her obligations to her husband, unless those obligations become extinct; but these obligations never can be legally dissolved but by *his death;* and the only way that *his death* sets her at liberty, is because *it* extinguishes her obligations to him. So the broken law binds the sinner to spiritual death as the inexorable penalty, and there is no way for the sinner *legally* to get rid of this penalty, but by extinguishing the claims of the law. Until this is done, the poor culprit is held fast by the legal claims of divine justice. This claim, which is infinite in its nature and extent, must be answered, or the sinner must be held fast to eternity. Therefore, the poor sinner not being able to answer the demands of justice, must lie under it, and be bound forever; except some kind, almighty friend, should step in as his surety, and bear the penalty for him. On this plan the claim of the law could be extinguished, and the sinner set free from his obligations, as the woman would be, to her deceased husband.

Now Christ Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer, is such a friend (Oh! how our hearts ought to glow with love and gratitude,) he disarmed the law by bearing the penalty. His death and sufferings answered and fulfilled the claims of infinite justice, and made it lawful and perfectly consistent with the rectitude of God's moral government for a sinner to be saved. Therefore, when a sinner comes to Christ, and accepts of him as his righteousness, the requisitions of the law are all answered

and perfectly silenced by the great atonement of the cross, and the believer's union with Christ is as legally formed, as when a woman, whose husband is dead, is married to another man; and God can be just and the justifier of him who believeth on Jesus.

The believer being thus united to Christ, is made a partaker of a spiritual resurrection from his old state of death; and by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, he brings forth fruit unto God, by a godly life and conversation.

5. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death.

6. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead whereon we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

The word flesh, means our natural state, under the broken covenant. While the sinner remains in this unhappy state, bound to spiritual death, by the penalty of the law, he is destitute of spiritual light, and is judicially held in a state of moral darkness under the influence of every motive to evil. Consequently, he is actuated by *motions of sin*, or sinful passions, and vile and wicked affections, which occupy his whole system, and reign through all the powers of his soul and body, in consequence of his being held in this dismal state by the judicial sentence of the law; and, consequently, all he does is sinful, and he is uniformly prone to do evil; and thus he continues to do those things that render him a prey to death and eternal perdition.

But when he comes to Christ, he is delivered from this awful, judicial sentence of the law, and is redeemed from this legal condemnation, by the atonement; and the law loses its hold, and its penal demand becomes extinct, by which he was personally bound; and he con-

sequently becomes a servant of God, and is enabled, through divine grace, to serve him with a renewed heart, from the principles of spiritual life; and not in a cold, formal manner, with a bare external conformity to the the mere outward letter of the law. Thus, the believer enjoying the light of life, is furnished with divine motives, and strength to walk in the ways of religion, and being set free by the Son of God, he is free, indeed.

LECTURE X.

ROMANS VII. 7-25.

7. What shall we say, then, is the law, sin? God forbid. Nay I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.

The Apostle had clearly demonstrated that sinners, in a state of nature, were under the curse, and were judicially bound by the penalty of the law, to a state of spiritual death; in which all communications of light and spiritual life were forfeited, and forbidden, by the penal sentence of condemnation; and that it was impossible for them to be the subjects of genuine holiness, until they, by faith, through the righteousness of Christ, became free from the penalty of the law, which holds them in a state of death and sin. It might appear on a superficial view of this subject, that the divine and holy law of God was, in such a case, accessory to sin, and, consequently, liable to be charged with criminality; in being the occasion of the sinner's being kept in a state of spiritual death, in which it was morally impossible for him to be holy,

The Apostle, therefore, brings forward this objection, "What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Against this he expressed his solemn protest. God forbid! This cannot be. He then proceeded to show that the very nature of the law, was the direct opposite of sin; for no one could know what particular temper, or prac-

tice, was sinful, except it was forbidden. Were it not for the radical principles of the moral law, there could be no such thing as either virtue or vice; consequently, it must be evident that that cannot be in itself sinful, which is itself the only rule to point out what is right, and what is wrong. I could never have known, says the Apostle, that it was wrong to lust after any thing that was not my own, if the law, as it is expressed in the tenth commandment, had not forbidden me to covet my neighbor's property. Thus, it appears, that the law is so far from being sinful, that it is the only rule to regulate the very disposition of the heart, as well as the life and conversation.

8. But sin taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin *was* dead.

The Apostle having, in few words, shown that the law was not sinful, as it was the only thing that convinced us of sin, and brought our transgressions to view; he proceeds further to evince this truth by the effects of the law on our minds, when it is brought home to our consciences. The author of this, is well convinced that the Apostle in arguing this point experimentally, has given a short, but very comprehensive sketch of his own experience; and carried it on from step to step to the end of the chapter.

Dr. Scott, and some others, think the sense of this verse is, that a sinner, when he views the strict requisitions of the law, feels his natural enmity to holiness rising against the commandments of God, so that his corrupt nature, impatient of restraint, breaks forth with redoubled resolution in the indulgence of his vicious propensities.

Dr. Doddridge, and some others, think that the sin-

ner under convictions, feeling the terrors of the law, is disposed to yield to despair, and seeing no hope of mercy from the broken covenant, yields himself up to his evil propensities, as though he considered it useless for a lost sinner to strive against sin. But I must confess that I am not satisfied with either of these opinions.

There is no necessity to translate the Greek word, επιθυμιαν, by the word, concupiscence, it will, indeed, signify concupiscence, lust, covetousness, and any wicked desire and propensity of the heart; but it will, also, signify any good feelings of the mind, such as a strong desire towards any lawful enjoyment, fervor, anxiety, &c. In Luke xxii. 15, this same word is used by Christ, to signify a strong anxiety of mind. Our Saviour said to his disciples "with desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." That is, he had a strong anxiety, &c. In Phil. i. 23, Paul uses this same word to signify earnestness of mind. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." See, also, 1 Tim. iii. 1; Heb. vi. 11; and Rev. ix. 6.

This text might, with, at least, equal propriety, be translated thus: "For sin taking occasion, (or the opportunity,) by the law, wrought in me every anxiety of mind." That is, sin (which is personified, and spoken of as an agent,) roused by the force of conviction, and taking occasion by the penal sentence of the law upon me as a sinner, wrought upon my mind, and filled me with horror, and every possible desire, and anxiety to be delivered from the impending danger which threatened my destruction. But sin could not do this, or have any such effect, if there were no law to condemn the sinner; for, if there were no legal sanction, sin would

have r guiltiness, and, consequently, would be a mere nug: ory thing.

The author flatters himself that when the judicious reader considers that the Apostle was entering upon his own experience, and beginning with his first convictions, which he felt on his way to Damascus, he will feel the propriety of the construction given above; and, more especially, if he understands Greek, for he must know the meaning of the word επιθημιαν. And if we admit the above translation, how naturally the next verse will come in; which would be harsh, and unnatural, on any other construction.

9. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

While the law was dead—that is, while the Apostle was blind to its demands, his prospects of life were strong, and he thought he was doing God service, and living uprightly. He was blind to the true nature of the law of God, and did not consider what was necessary to answer the demands of divine justice. He thought that mere external ceremonies were true religion, and a pharisaical morality was all the law required. But when he got a view of the true nature and spirituality of the law, his sin revived, he became sensible that he had transgressed the holy commandments of God, both in his heart and in his life; and he found that he was under the dreadful penalty of the law, and bound by the sentence of death, and exposed to eternal ruin.

10. And the commandment which *was ordained* to life, I found to be unto death.

11. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it, slew *me*.

The laws of God were enacted and ordained by the

authority of God, on holy principles, and are calculated to promote spiritual life in our souls, and would insure our life and happiness as long as we should perfectly obey. But the penalty annexed to disobedience, infers death on the smallest transgression. This the convinced sinner finds, when he gets a right view of the law. He discovers that, while it directs to life and is the only rule by which our principles and conduct ought to be governed, it is, on the other hand, in consequence of our sin, the only rule by which we are condemned to death. But sin, consisting in the violation of the law, and incurring its penalty, deceives the poor sinner, and procures his own condemnation, either in time, in the court of conscience, or, when it is too late, before the dread tribunal of God.

12. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

The experience of the Apostle, as well as that of every convicted sinner, plainly proves that the law, in itself, is holy—yea, every commandment in the law is founded on holy principles and directs to holiness in heart and life; the law requires nothing but what is just, and upon the whole, it really is good in its nature and tendency, although its penalty be death in all its consequences to the transgressor. The very idea of sin implies the rectitude of the law, which is the instrument of conviction; and there is no convinced sinner, but must justify the law, or he could not have a sense of criminality for transgressing it. The very language of genuine conviction, is, "the law is holy and just, but I am wicked."

13. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

The Apostle, by his usual and strong expression, God forbid, denies that the law in itself considered, was the cause of his death; but asserts that sin was the cause. Yet sin became the cause by the law condemning it, and sentencing the sinner to death on its account. Thus, while sin appears as the procuring cause of death, through the law, it clearly evinces that sin itself condemned by the law, becomes emphatically, (and figuratively speaking,) the sinner's death, and not the good law of God; for the law condemns none but transgressors; so that sin, by the law, and not the law itself, is the cause of death.

The author would translate this verse in the following manner: "Was, then, that which is good made death unto me? God forbid; but sin *became death unto me*, so that sin working death in me, by that which is good, might appear *in such a light*, as that sin *itself* by the commandment becomes, by way of eminence, the evil doer."

14. For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal—sold under sin.

The Apostle had all along before this, spoken in the past tense, "I *had* not known sin but by the law. I *was* alive without the law once; but—sin *revived*, and I *died*. For sin *deceived* me, and *slew* me," &c. But now he begins, and throughout the passage he continues to speak in the present tense. This appears a convincing evidence that he was, at first, giving us his views of sin, the law, and his condemned state previous to, and in the time of his conviction. But now he comes to speak of the views and feelings he had of the law, and of himself, in a converted state.

We know, says he, we who are savingly enlightened,

do know, and believe, that the divine law of God is not sinful, or, in any degree, blamable, but that it is spiritual; that is, it is holy, perfectly pure, and has respect unto the spirit and temper of the heart, as well as to the outward conduct. But, alas! as to myself, says the Apostle, I acknowledge with shame, that *I am carnal*—that is, in too great a degree, possessed of corrupt nature, and am so much influenced by corrupt propensities still remaining in me, that, in the style of lamentation, I may say, that I am sold under sin. Christians are sometimes under a deep and trembling sense of their corruptions, disposed to say the worst things of themselves. But in their worst times, they will justify the law of God.

15. For that which I do, I allow not, for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that I do.

The Christian feels, at different times, two inclinations in him, and wills different ways, and chooses different things according to the prevalence of one or the other of two different natures within him. The true characteristic of a genuine child of God is, not that he has no corrupt nature in him, but that he has two natures in him, a sinful, and a holy nature, and that his whole life is a warfare carried on between these two discordant natures. And where is the Christian who cannot witness with the Apostle, that the things that he, from a holy desire, would wish to do, he often does not, and the things that he abhors, are the very things which he often does. And they who pretend to live without sin, have got a great length beyond the Apostle; and while they are basking in their pretended regions of perfection in holiness, the Apostle is lamenting that he was laboring under the struggle of the flesh lusting

against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that he could not do the things that he would, (Gal. v. 17.)

16. If, then, I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good.

17. Now, then, it is no more I who do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18. For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform that which is good, I find not.

19. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Inasmuch as the Apostle found that he hated the sin that he committed, he argued that he must, of course, view the law as good and holy. The Christian does not object against the law, but approves of it as an excellent rule. His objection lies against himself, because he comes short of his duty.

The Apostle, by a curious kind of personification, viewed himself as being two persons. His renewed nature, which was as far as he loved the law of God and longed to be holy, he called himself; but his remains of corrupt nature he calls sin and flesh. Therefore, he says it was not himself that acted so contrary to law, and was led off too much to evil, but sin that still remained in him.

For he found, by sad experience, that with all the sanctifying grace he had, he still had a remnant of his old nature in him, in which there was nothing good, and, as far as it was permitted to influence him, it disposed him to nothing but evil. Therefore, although his rectified mind delighted in that which is good, and chose it and longed to act accordingly, yet, often through weakness and temptations, he found himself coming far short of the desired object. Thus it came often to pass, that,

as he had said before, he came short of the good that he uniformly aimed at; and instead of coming up to his own desires and resolutions, he often did the very things he hated, and had resolved not to do.

20. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

The Apostle repeats again that he acted in two distinct natures: himself the sanctified nature, and sin the old unsanctified remnant of corruption; so that when he sinned, he acted contrary to the disposition of his renewed heart, and from the principles of his relict of corruption.

21. I find, then, a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me;

22. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

23. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members.

Here the Apostle uses another mode of expression, and speaks of himself under the idea of feeling two laws: one in his mind, and another in his members.

He found, by experience, that there was in him a degree of governing power, which he called a law, which sometimes overruled him, so that when he attempted to do that which is good and holy, he found that a sinful imperfection sat upon his best duties, and rendered them, in a degree, unholy, when compared with the purity of the law of God.

His real delight was in God's holy law, and he earnestly wished to live up to it, from a principle of true religion in his heart. But he, by experience, discovered another law, which resided in his corrupt nature, which, in some degree, remained in him, and which, in a greater or less degree, opposed the sanctified disposition of his

mind, and too often made him a captive to this evil disposition arising from his corrupt nature. A sense of his great imperfections, and the risings of corrupt nature, so contrary to the sanctified taste and disposition of his renewed mind, often made the holy Apostle cry out in strains of bitter lamentation over his wretched infirmities.

24. Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Whether the Apostle felt thus wretched under an impression of the weight of his corruptions, when he wrote these lamentable words, or not, we are to consider him as giving an account of what he had often felt, and how he had often bemoaned his unhappy case. The exclamation, "Oh! wretched man that I am!" is the natural language of distress, and of a deep sense of the vileness of sin, and the purity of God's law.

Paul was a man of very high sensibility, and felt, spoke, and acted with resolution and strong animation. He was formerly a furious persecutor, and when he was converted into an Apostle, he was both active and intrepid in the cause of the Gospel; his feelings ran high in the joys and comforts of religion. See Rom. viii. 31–39; 1 Cor. xv. 55–57; 2 Cor. iv. 17., and v. 13, 14, and xii. 9, 10; Gal. vi. 14; Eph. iii. 8; Philip. i. 21–23; 2 Tim. i. 12, and iv. 6–8. He was also apt to express himself very pathetically under a sense of his unworthiness. He called himself less than the least of all saints—a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, and unworthy to be called an Apostle—because he persecuted the church of Christ; he hesitated not to say that he was the chief of sinners—that he was nothing—that he was the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things. The Apostle having put these emphatical words, "Oh!

wretched man that I am!" in the mouths of thousands of God's people, they often feel and express them as appropriate to the state of their minds; and in these, and such words, they bemoan their case before God under an humbling sense of the corruption of their hearts.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death. It is, generally, the opinion that the Apostle alluded to a cruel custom sometimes practiced by tyrants, viz: the binding of a dead corpse to their captives to punish them. Possibly he may have had such an allusion; but he meant the burden of corruption which was attached to his sanctified soul; this relict of sin he called a body of death, as it was a remnant of the old man, or his old corrupt nature, which remained in him, and often made him groan under it, as under an insupportable load of wretchedness.

Who shall deliver me. This expression intimates that the Apostle was anxious to obtain a complete deliverance from even the remains of sin, as from an intolerable burden; we are not to view it as the language of despair, but the fervor of desire and anxiety. The christian often wishes and prays for more grace to help him to overcome the corruptions of his heart, and, indeed, sometimes he is too impatient, and frets himself because God will not make him perfect in holiness, even in this imperfect state. And if he be not pretty strong in faith, his sense of sin will drive him into despondency, and cause him to imagine that he has no interest in Christ. Whether Paul ever admitted a doubt of his interest, we know not; but we know that many a pious child of God has. It requires a good degree of confidence in Christ to bear up under a violent attack of sin and corruption; and we all find that in a time of desertion, and the risings of corrupt nature, or during a fit of

temptation, if the proper exercise of our faith fail us, we immediately scruple the reality of our religion, and sit down in despondency and bemoan our wretchedness.

25. I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

This was a very happy and most elegant turn in the Apostle. He rises from the depth of depression of mind, from the view he had been taking of his remaining corruptions, and from brooding over his wretchedness under his body of death, and on a view of the glorious Gospel his soul springs forth into ecstacy, and in broken, ecstatic language, he cries out, "I thank God, for Jesus Christ, our Lord." No sooner had he cried out, in deep anxiety, "Who shall deliver me?" than he, by a happy view of faith, beholds his glorious deliverer, in his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who was able to save the chief of sinners; and with a heart full of cordial acquiescence, and glowing with gratitude for such an unspeakable gift, he can do no more than thank his gracious God for such a precious Redeemer.

The word διὰ signifies through, for, upon the account of, &c. However, the sentence is evidently a sudden burst of ecstatic joy and gratitude, and is, consequently, short, eliptical, and pathetic, and it makes no odds how we construe it, so that we understand the Apostle as full of inexpressible gratitude to God for the confident hope of a final and complete deliverance, through Jesus Christ, his Lord and Redeemer.

How happy it would be if Christians could follow this example. When their spirits are sunk under a sense of remaining corruption, when they are sensible of shortcomings, and filled with remorse, and hate sin, and their own wicked hearts, how happy it would be for them if they could hold fast their confidence in Christ, and be

thankful that their faithful Redeemer will, in due time, completely deliver them from all sin by a full, everlasting salvation. This would enable them to wait with humble patience for the time of deliverance, and, in confidence in the faithfulness in Christ, even to glory in their infirmities.

25. So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh, the law of sin.

The Apostle, from a view of imperfections in himself, on the one hand, and of a final deliverance in due time, by the Lord Jesus Christ, on the other, submits, with humble and thankful acquiescence, in the plan of divine grace, considering that God has so constituted the plan of the Gospel that his people must remain in a state of imperfection while they are in this world; and they may expect, that while they habitually endeavor to live agreeably to the law of God—and it is the desire of their hearts to do so—yet they must expect to come short of attaining to perfection, because of in-dwelling sin and corruption. This remnant of corrupt nature will still be a cause of humility and repentance; and the only ground of comfort and rejoicing will ever be *through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

Note.—There is but this one passage in the New Testament that gives a regular example of the conflicts of God's people. Here the Spirit of God has favored us with the authentic experience of the great Apostle, Paul. And a great favor it is, indeed, for which we ought to be thankful. It is not natural for us to imagine that pious christians daily commit sins; and although every christian knows, by sad experience, that he is burdened with many imperfections, and although the Scriptures have recorded a number of the miscarriages of some of the

best of God's people, yet each one is prone to imagine that other Christians are better than himself; and, like Paul, he calls himself the chief of sinners. And though his good sense teaches him better, yet he still fancies that he is an exception from all others. Nay, notwithstanding our good sense, and our great pretensions to accuracy in the operations of divine grace in the heart, subduing and mortifying our evil propensities, we often find that when we feel our corruptions strong and sin prevailing, and our affections and zeal becoming languid, we rashly pass sentence against ourselves, and are ready to pronounce at once that we have no religion. Thus it comes to pass that many pious people have a spell of doubting, for every conflict they have with the corruptions of their hearts.

It is to be feared that many serious christians entirely rob themselves of all the instruction and divine consolation contained in this excellent passage of Scripture, that is well calculated to direct, and give them consolation, in the worst of times, in their spiritual warfare. We religiously think that to give full weight to what the Apostle says, would too much encourage sin in our hearts; and yet all that we have ever felt does not exceed what the Apostle says he felt, either as to sin or holiness.

Let us honestly examine the matter. Who was Paul? Every christian in the world, I suppose, has acknowledged that St. Paul was, at least, one of the most eminent christians that ever lived. No doubt he was so. Well, here he has given us his views, feelings, desires, complaints, hopes, distresses, conflicts and comforts. He has told us how he became a christian, and how it fared with him after he was a christian. And how was it?

1. He was a careless sinner, insensible of his lost

state, and thought himself alive, and that all was well with him. (Verses 8, 9) Was not this the case with you, Oh, reader?

2. The law, at length, came home to his heart, his sin revived, he saw himself dead, condemned, and that he was exceeding sinful, and exposed to the horrible sentence of justice. (Verses 9, 10, 13.) Was this the case with you?

3. It is reasonable to suppose that the Apostle remained three days in Damascus under the terrors of guilt, when Ananias was sent to him, to tell him what to do. Acts ix. 6–9. Ananias came, and preached the Gospel to him, and opened his eyes, &c. and Paul submitted to be baptized, and made a profession of his faith. Acts ix. 17 and xxii. 10–16. The Apostle said nothing of this in this passage, but St. Luke has recorded it, in all the particulars. Reader, hast thou given thyself up to Christ?

Now, let us take a view of the Apostle in his converted state.

1. He saw that the law of God is spiritual, and was sensible that his heart was carnal, opposed to the law. (Verse 14.) Are you sensible of this?

2. He did not allow sin, but hated it. (Verse 15.) Is it so with you?

3. He thought the law was a good law, and wished he could conform to it, and did not wish it to be altered. (Verse 16.) Is it so with you?

4. He had two distinct dispositions in him—one coincided with the law, and the other with sin. (Verses 17–20) Have you two dispositions also?

5. He delighted in the law of God, had a spiritual taste for the holy duties which the law required. (Verse 22.) Do you feel so too?

6. He was sensible of the contrariety of his corrupt nature to the divine will, and felt himself a captive, contrary to his wish when his sin had the upper hand of him. (Verse 23.) Do you feel so too?

7. He mourned and lamented over his prevailing corruptions, felt his sins a heavy burden, and ardently longed to be delivered from sin as very offensive to him. Is it so with you?

8. He looked to Christ for deliverance, in due time, and was heartily thankful that there was such a Saviour provided for him. (Verse 25.) Do you also depend on Christ?

These things do prove evidently and undeniably that Paul was really a christian, and that his heart was renewed by the Holy Spirit. But now let us see what this good man—this true and great christian—said of himself, on the other hand.

1. He was carnal, sold under sin. (Verse 14.) Do you feel this, too?

2. He did what he allowed not, and what he hated. (Verse 15.) Do you do so, too?

3. He had sin, not only now and then, but dwelling in him. (Verses 17, 20.) Have you, too?

4. There was no good thing in him; that is, in his corrupt nature that remained in him; and when he attempted to do good, and wished to do good, he had not power to do it. (Verse 10.) Is this your case?

5. Still, when he would do good, evil was present with him. He found that he did no duty perfectly, but that sin was intermixed with the very best duties he performed. (Verse 21.) Are you as imperfect as this?

6. He had a certain kind of a law in his members; that is, in his evil disposition, which made war with his sanctified mind, and this unruly disposition often de-

feated him, and took him captive, in spite of all he could do. (Verse 23.) Do you feel such a law, and are you sometimes taken captive?

7. He had a body of death; that is, a burden of sin, the dead weight of a wicked heart, attached to him. (Verse 24.) Have you, too?

8. Even when he was comfortable and happy, and thankful under the hope of final deliverance through Christ, he still served the law of sin, and was as imperfect as ever. Do you find it so with you?

Who would have thought that a believer, a real christian, would be such a man as Paul? But, let us ask again, where is the true believer, the real christian, but who is exactly such a man, and answers the description precisely, in every part of it? Now, this same Paul, when he is prescribing rules for the christian to walk by, directs him to avoid every appearance of evil. His rules are perfect, and imperfection is not admitted. But when he exemplifies the experience and attainments of a christian, he exhibits him in a constant warfare with his depravity and corruptions, and all his hope is founded on the righteousness of Christ, and his faithful promise to complete, in due time, the work of sanctification. Then let us learn, with the Apostle, thankfully to trust to the merits of Christ, and maintain a steady warfare with sin. But what shall we say to those who say that they are perfect? That they commit no sin? We can only say that they are ignorant of the perfection of the law, and of their own hearts; and if they are christians at all, they are not like Paul, and let them beware lest their sins deceive them, and slay them, when there is no remedy.

LECTURE XI.

ROMANS VIII. 1–17.

1. There is, therefore, now no condemnatien to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

After the Apostle had fully shown that nothing but the imputed righteousness of Christ can deliver us from the penalty of the law, or from the power and dominion of sin; and, also, that the vicarious death of Christ will completely redeem us, and make us heirs of all the blessings of the new covenant, he then deduced this comfortable inference from what he had said, viz.: that it is impossible for a believer, who is united to Christ, the glorious Saviour, ever to be found guilty, in the view of divine justice, or come into condemnation. Because he is removed from a state of nature to a state of grace, by the all-meritorious atonement of Christ, his surety. That is, he is delivered from the curse of the broken law; so that he does not live, like he formerly did, in his natural state, as a fallen child of Adam, under the penalty of divine justice, which state the Apostle calls *flesh*. But he has, in his surety, paid the penalty, and is thereby entitled to a discharge from the legal obligation, and is admitted to live in the enjoyment of the blessed advantages of the Gospel, which the Apostle calls *Spirit*.

Divines have universally explained "walking after the flesh, and after the Spirit," as living in the habitual practice of sin, and living in the habitual practice of holiness. They say that the Apostle introduced this as

a characteristic of him who is in Christ Jesus, to wit.: that he does not, in the habitual course of his life, follow the dictates of his corrupt inclinations, but lives, or endeavors to live, according to the dictates of the divine Spirit of grace in his heart, influencing him to that which is good. That this is the characteristic of a believer is readily granted, but that the Apostle meant this by what he has said is another question. The author of these lectures thinks not. He thinks, this phrase is intended, by the Apostle, to point out the immediate effect of being in Christ, to wit.: the believer is no longer in his natural state, under the sentence of the broken covenant, but is placed under a new dispensation by the Gospel. As though the Apostle should say, "there can be no condemnation to them who are brought from under the law, and are introduced into the liberty of the Gospel, by an interest in Jesus Christ."

The object of the Apostle is not to point out the evidences of faith, but to show the real state of the believer, free from the penalty of the law, and enjoying, through Christ, his surety, the permanent blessing of justification, and all the happy benefits of the Gospel. The scriptural idea of walking is, to stay, abide, live, continue or remain. Christ would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill him. That is, he would not stay in Judea. Jesus said, "He who followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii. 12.) That is, he shall not abide in darkness. (John xii. 46.) And it must be evident that Paul means our natural, fallen, guilty, state of condemnation, by the words flesh, law of sin and death, carnal mind, body, mortal bodies; and that, by the words Spirit, Spirit of life, spiritual minds, Spirit of God, he means the dispensation of the Gospel.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made men free from the law of sin and death.

The Apostle here states the radical ground on which the believer is not, and cannot be condemned. The law of the Spirit of life—the glorious Gospel—which is applied by the Holy Spirit to restore the sinner from a state of death to a state of life, (and, therefore, is called the "ministration of the Spirit," and also "the ministration of rightoeusness"—2 Cor. iii. 8, 9,) hath set me perfectly and forever free from my old state of condemnation, in which I was, under the broken covenant, as a fallen child of Adam. Here, it is plain enough, that Paul meant the same thing, by the law of the Spirit of life, as he did, in the first verse, by the *Spirit*, and the same, by the law of sin and death, as he did before by the word *flesh;* and he says, by the one, he was set free from the other, in consequence of his being in Christ Jesus; and, therefore, there could be no condemnation to those who were by faith interested in Christ.

3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh.

4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

For God hath supplied the incapacity of the law, *to free me from death*, in that it was weak through the flesh, by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh; and, by a sacrifice for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled for us, who walk not after the law, but after the Spirit.

This translation, the author thinks, contains the true meaning of the Greek.

The law, in consequence of our fall in Adam, involving us in a state of guilt; and, in consequence of our

daily transgressions, is totally unable to justify us. But God supplied this deficiency in the law, and made our justification perfectly legal, and consistent with the strictest principles of justice, by the happy and wonderful expedient of sending his only begotten Son, to take our nature upon him, so that he might be capable of suffering; and to offer himself a sacrifice on the cross. By this expedient God condemned, or adjudged sin to be worthy of punishment, and the punishment was inflicted on the human nature of Christ, in the room of the sinner. Thus the righteous demands of the law were fully answered by the sufferings of such a dignified and divine person, who was the only begotten Son of God, though he appeared, and suffered, in the form of humanity; and these demands were fully answered for us, provided we believe in Christ, and by faith are emancipated from our natural state of condemnation, and brought into the glorious liberty of the Gospel.

Thus the Apostle showed that the Gospel, the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, had, on the proper ground of the most accurate justice, made him free from his legal state of death.

5. For they who are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; but they who are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

They who continue to be according to the flesh, that is, in their natural state, under the curse of spiritual death, understand, and their minds can perceive only those things that belong to a state of nature, consequently they are led no higher than mere sensuality and wickedness. But those who are delivered from this state, according to the Gospel, have a spiritual understanding given them, so that they, by divine illumination, can understand the glorious things revealed to them by the Spirit of God.

6. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

The literal translations of this verse is:—For the understanding of the flesh is death, but the understanding of the Spirit is life and peace; and the sense is, the greatest knowledge and comprehension of mind, that a man in a natural state, under the curse of the law can have, can never give him spiritual life. He may possess naturally good talents, he may have a good education, and his mind may be improved by study, but all is but death at last, without the knowledge of the Gospel; the poor unhappy creature still walketh in darkness, and can not have the light of life. But that divine light by which the Spirit of God illuminates the soul, when a man is interested in the Gospel, and redeemed from the curse of the law, communicates to him such a knowledge, and understanding of divine things, that it produces in the mind spiritual life, and perfect peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God; neither, indeed, can be.

The Greek word in this and the sixth verse, which is translated mind and minded, is φρονημα a noun which signifies the intelligent powers of the mind, such as wisdom, understanding, knowledge or sagacity; and the Apostle speaks of our fallen, depraved state under the law, as a person possessing these mental powers, and calls it flesh. He says that the wisdom and knowledge of the flesh, that is, of a man in his corrupt state, is set in direct opposition to God; and his mental capacities are not (υποτασσεται) arranged, or set in order, according to the law of God; neither is it possible for it to be so, while ever the poor culprit continues in a state of guilt, under

the sentence of death, which binds him fast, in a state of alienation from God—totally blind to that which is good. This text perfectly coincides with 1 Cor. ii. 14:—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, (things unseen) neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Therefore, before a man can be really enlightened by the Spirit of God, he must be brought out of his natural state, by the Gospel of Christ.

8. So, then, they who are in the flesh cannot please God.

While a sinner continues under the curse of the law, and will not accept of Christ as his Saviour, there is nothing in him, or belonging to him, that is pleasing to God, and nothing he can do meets with his approbation, until he believes in Christ. He may read, pray, attend to the word and ordinances of God, do alms, be honest in his dealings, &c. &c.; all can not atone for his guilt, or restore him to the favor of God. To believe, to give up his heart to Christ, is the first thing he can do that will please God, and until he does this, he must lie in the flesh under the curse, in a state of death, and exposed to eternal misery.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

The Apostle having shown the difference between those who are in a state of nature, and those who are interested in the Gospel, and having spoken of the blind, and wretched state of those who still remain under the curse of the broken covenant, now proceeds to point out the special characteristics of those who are in the flesh, and those who are in the Spirit. He speaks hopefully of the Roman converts, alleging that they

were not still remaining in their natural state, and this would be proved to be a fact, provided the Holy Spirit dwelt in their hearts by his sanctifying grace, renewing their minds, and sanctifying their natures, and daily disposing them to act worthy of the Gospel. If any man find in him a taste for holy enjoyments, an inward relish of heart for divine and spiritual things, a delight in the Gospel, and in religion, *he is in the Spirit*, and not in the *flesh;* because the Spirit of God is in him, disposing him to that which is good. And, although he may feel, in himself, a thousand opposing principles, warring against the law of his mind, yet his possessing a principle of holiness, counter to those evil inclinations, which would, and often do, lead him astray, proves that he has passed from death unto life, and is interested in Christ.

But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ—if the sanctifying grace of the Spirit is not experienced in his heart—if he has not a holy disposition wrought in him, and his mind is not inclined to spiritual things, *he does not belong to Christ*, he is not a true believer, and is still in a state of death, under the power and dominion of sin.

10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteonsness.

But if you be interested in Christ, and if Christ be united to you, as your righteousness and sanctification, *the body is dead*, that is, the old man, your natural state, your state of death under the law, *is dead*, is extinct, it has no power, the broken law has no force against you; *because of sin*, that is because of the sacrifice for sin, the atonement, which Christ, the surety, made on the cross for you; by which the law is satisfied, and its

penalty removed, and taken out of the way. *But the Spirit is life,* that is, your spiritual state under the Gospel, the circumstances in which the Gospel has placed you, *is life;* you are justified and made legally alive, and you are renewed and made spiritually alive, and you have your claim, in the promises of the Gospel, to eternal life; *because of righteousness,* that is, because of the Gospel taking away your guilt, and restoring you to a state of perfect innocence before God, through the righteousness of Christ.

11. But if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit who dwelleth in you.

If the Spirit of God who returned to the human soul of Jesus Christ, and restored to him the light of the glory of God, his Father, (after he had endured the dreadful withdrawment of spiritual light, and restored him again to a state of spiritual life,) dwell in you, which is a sure token of your interest in the death of Christ; God, who thus raised Christ from spiritual death, shall also raise you from a state of death in sin, (which the Apostle calls *a mortal body,*) by the illumination of this same Spirit who will abide in your hearts by his quickening and sanctifying influences.

NOTE.—Expositors explain those two verses to mean temporal death, on the account of the fall, and the remains of sin, and of the resurrection of the body from the grave. But it is evident that the death Paul is speaking of, is in consequence of Christ dwelling in the believer, and it is evident that the sin, that causes this death, is in consequence of the in-dwelling of Christ. Now, how unnatural it is to imagine that sin, and consequently death, should affect the believer's body, and kill it, because Christ is in him. Divines say that temporal

death is a part of the penalty of the law, and they also say that Christ died, and fully bore the penalty in the room of his people. Then to say that the believer, because of Adam's fall, and in consequence of remaining sin, must suffer temporal death; and that, too, because Christ is in him, is too palpable a contradiction, and an absurdity too glaring to be admitted, even although it be a common opinion, and handed out by the pens of writers of high standing and respectability. But we are to consider that the Apostle was not treating of temporal death, nor a bodily resurrection, in this chapter. His object was to show how a sinner was brought out of a state of condemnation, and out of a state of death in sin, to a life of holiness. We are also to remember that the word sin is frequently used by Paul, to signify a sacrifice for sin. See verse 3—"And for sin," a sacrifice; also, 2 Cor. v. 21. "Made him to be sin for us," a sacrifice; and Heb. xiii. 11—"Bodies of those beasts brought into the sanctuary for sin," for sacrifice. We are also to remember that Paul frequently used the phrases—dead, death, body, deeds of the body, body of death, flesh, &c. to signify a state of corruption, or spiritual death. These things being considered, we can easily see the propriety of saying, that if Christ be in us, our state under the broken law is dead, or extinguished, and our guilt removed by the sacrifice of Christ. And thus we can understand that God by his Spirit who raised up Jesus, would raise up, or make the believer alive (ζωοποιησει) by the in-dwelling of his Spirit quickening him, and bringing him out of that state of death, in which he was by natural generation, as a mortal child of Adam, to a state of life as united to Christ, begotten by regeneration.

The author first got the ideas he has given, on these

two verses, from a hint by a quotation from the celebrated Mr. Locke; Drs. Whitby, Doddridge and Scott, have reprobated Mr. Locke's explanation; but, if Mr. Locke were alive, he, no doubt, would pay little respect to their mere assertions, and the author has but little doubt but he could, with his usual strength of reasoning, vindicate his sense of the passage, and as easily show the absurdity of supposing that temporal death was a part of the penalty of the law, incurred by the fall of Adam, and that Christ took away the penalty of the law by his death, and then saying that believers must die because of the fall, and their own corruption; and that, too, because Christ was in them!

12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh—to life after the flesh.

13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

The believer, by his crucified Redeemer, delivering him from the penal debt, which he owed to the broken covenant, which the Apostle calls the flesh, or delivering him from his state of condemnation, is brought under the most solemn obligations to Christ, his gracious deliverer, to love him, to thank him, and to devote himself wholly to his honor and service, and he owes nothing to the flesh, his fallen state, in which he was held in a state of death in sin, to serve his lusts and follow his evil propensities, by a judicial sentence of divine justice. From this awful debt in which he was held by the formal requisitions of the divine law, he is set at liberty by the death of his surety.

All those who continue to live, that is, who continue living, under the penalty of the law, in a state of nature shall die, that is, they must forever remain in this awful state of death. But those who, by faith, get an interest

in the Gospel, and through the happy effects of the Gospel, do nullify, or make void *the deeds of the body*, that is, the requisitions of the law, shall live, that is, they shall be acquitted from the sentence of death, and shall partake of, and enjoy life, both spiritual and eternal.

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The Apostle now proceeds to show, that true believers who are interested in the Gospel by faith, and are influenced by the divine Spirit in their hearts, are the children of God. What a wonderful change takes place—they who were once slaves to sin, alienated from God, bound in the shackles of death, are, by the happy expedient of faith in Christ on the plan of the Gospel, constituted the children of God; and are, consequently, guided, illuminated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the Apostle said to the Galatians, (chap. iv. 4–6:) "God sent forth his Son * * * to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father."

15. For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.

While a sinner is in a state of nature, he is in a state of bondage, as a servant, bound by the penal law, and under the dominion of sin, and alienated from God; but when he becomes interested in Christ, he receives the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit which now dwells in him gives him a different state and temper of mind from what he had when he was under the law, and without any good hope, or comfortable prospects, but in constant dread and uneasiness under the accusations of his own

mind, through a consciousness of guilt. The Spirit of the Gospel does not lead him back again into this gloomy state of fear and uneasy forebodings of evil; but, by his divine teachings and influences on his heart, he is made to possess a filial temper of mind and is admitted to enjoy a blessed confidence in God, and is enabled to realise his relation to him as an adopted child, and has the liberty and happiness of calling him *Father*. The Syriac, or Hebrew word, Abba, signifies Pater in Greek, and Father in English. Believers of different languages may each speak in his own respective tongue; but all have the same meaning, and God understands their language, and owns them all as his children.

Those who hold to the doctrine of falling from grace, cannot well coincide with the Apostle in this text, for they hold that a believer may receive the Spirit of bondage again to fear, and after he has received the Spirit of adoption, and claims the happy relation of a child of God, he may again fall back into a state of bondage and become an *adopted* child of the devil. Doubting christians may, and too often do, fall back into a state of fear, and doubt their relation to God, but they can never alter that relation, or change the filial temper of their hearts, nor can they change the witness of the Spirit that they have received.

16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God.

The Spirit beareth witness in our hearts, by his work within us, changing, renewing and sanctifying us; and our hearts experiencing a holy disposition wrought in us by the Spirit, is also a witness; so that the witness of the Spirit is necessarily connected with the witness of our own souls, that we are God's children, for the one

witness cannot be without the other. Holiness is the evidence of our adoption. The Spirit by giving this holiness, bears witness, and our own hearts becoming holy, bears witness to the same truth; for the Spirit never sanctifies an alien, and no alien is sanctified, and if I am sanctified I am not an alien, but a child; my sanctified soul bears this witness in feeling itself made holy, and the Spirit who makes me holy, by his sanctifying work bears witness with my spirit, that I am not an alien, but a child of God.

It has been often said that the Spirit of God shining on his work in the heart, is the witness of the Spirit, and the heart enabled, by this divine light, to see the work of the Spirit, is the corresponding witness of our spirits. We readily grant that the Spirit is pleased often to shine into the believer's heart, and that the believer, by this divine light, is able more clearly to see that there is a work of grace within him; but this is not properly the evidence of our adoption; this, it is true, enables us to see the evidence, but the evidence itself is the holy disposition of our hearts, and our hearts possessing this holy, filial temper, is the radical witness of our Spirits, and the Holy Spirits giving us, or working in us this holy disposition, is his bearing witness with our spirits. This witness every child of God has, at all times, and in all circumstances, whether he is able to see it or not. Sometimes the poor desponding child is left in darkness, and is not able to discover, to his comfort, this divine, sanctifying work of grace, but he is never without this witness in his heart, for he is breathing after God and religion in his darkest times, and the Spirit of God gives him this very breathing and makes him uneasy and uncomfortable when he can not see in him the tokens of the love of his heavenly Father.

The prevalence of an evidence is always according to the weight the judge gives to it in his own mind; we are our own judges in this case, and we always find a great degree of corruption in us, along with the Spirit's work, and therefore our unbelieving hearts are disposed to give more weight to our corruptions than to the witness of the Spirit; thus we often lose our comfort by not considering that if there be any holy disposition in us at all, it is the witness of the Spirit, although we have much contrary evidence in us, through the remains of corruption. But the witness is always there, let us give what weight to it we may. But, by-the-bye, we must remember that the inward witness of the Spirit is only a corroborating testimony to strengthen our faith. We must feel our hearts believing in and depending on Christ, before we can get much comfort from the witness of our adoption in our hearts.

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.

If, then, we are children, acknowledged of God, and adopted into his house, we are, consequently, heirs. A stranger may be adopted for more purposes than one; he may be adopted for no other purpose than that he may enjoy the common fare of the family into which he is adopted, such as protection, food, raiment, education, &c. without being an heir to the estate; or he may be adopted and entered upon the records, as a joint heir with the legal heirs of the inheritance. This is the plan on which God is pleased to adopt believers. Christ is the only begotten Son, and the rightful heir to the kingdom, and believers are adopted in union with him, as one with him, and joint heirs with him, to the everlasting enjoyment of the favor and smiles of God, and all

the comfort and happiness to be enjoyed in the kingdom of glory. Thus the heirs of God have, by their adoption, a joint claim with Christ, and equally valid with his, and while ever Christ can claim, the believer can. Moreover, this claim is inalienable, it cannot be bartered for any consideration. Christ holds the right in himself, and the believer can only claim through him, and no person can claim in the believer's name, therefore his claim can not be bartered. Neither can it be lost, because Christ holds it for him; the claim is not in the believer at all, but in Christ. Inasmuch, therefore, as Christ cannot lose his claim, the believer cannot. They who hold to the doctrine of falling from grace, do not appear to claim a right to the inheritance through Christ, but through their own faithfulness. Their doctrine holds out the idea that Christ only died to procure pardon for their past sin, on their repentance, and this sets them afoot, and then they have to stand by their own industry, in improving the grace they get, or fall, in consequence of their not living uprightly. This is surely a ticklish plan at best, not to say a miserable one But Paul's plan suits me the best; he makes the believer, as soon as he becomes a child, to become an heir; an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ, so that the inheritance is sure, "and his life is hid with Christ in God."

LECTURE XII.

ROMANS VIII. 17-27.

17. If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together.

This part of this text would be more properly translated thus: "Although we do, indeed, suffer with *him*, *it is* that we may be glorified with him." To see a child of God suffering affliction, persecution and distress, to see him harrassed with temptations, and chased from city to city, and brought to prison and to death, for the sake of the Gospel, does not look as if he were an heir of glory, and a joint heir with Christ. Indeed, when we consider the many difficulties the christian has to go through, we are ready to conclude that "if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men the most miserable." This was peculiarly the case with the Apostles and the primitive christians. But however unlikely it may seem, that those who are accounted as the lower class of mankind, and even those who are, as it were, the filth and offscouring of the earth, should, nevertheless, be the heirs of glory; yet, says the Apostle, our suffering condition here, for the sake of Christ, is no argument against our adoption, but is intended, among other purposes, to procure a more glorious reward for us when we shall appear with Christ in glory, and we may well bear these comparatively light afflictions, which are but for a mo ment, when they will work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

18. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time, *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

The Apostle here speaks of the sufferings which the children of God had to undergo during the first period of the church, when she had to wade through distress and persecutions. There were, evidently, two distinct periods to take place under the Gospel dispensation, which are spoken of in the New Testament; one is during the time from the day of pentecost to the commencement of the millennium; the other is to be during the time of the millennium. The first is a time of suffering, the other is to be a time of glory, when Christ shall reign over Jews and Gentiles, and shall possess the uttermost parts of the earth as his inheritance, when all persecution, sorrow and sighing shall be done away. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time," (καιρον τε νυν, the time which is now,) that is, under the present period of the church "is not worthy to be compared" or contrasted, or set in opposition to "the glory which shall be revealed in us," that is, the glory of the church which shall, in the last period, be manifested, εις ημας to us, to wit: to us christians, meaning the whole body of the church. The sense of the text is, in the author's humble opinion, all the sufferings of the church in the present era, are not worthy of a thought when we consider the glory that is awaiting her, in a future day; when all the Gentile world and opposing Jews, who now impede the progress of the Gospel, and stand in opposition to the kingdom of Christ, shall be converted to christianity, and the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of God. The author of these lectures is aware that he has not the opinions of expositors on his side, in the above explanation. But he deems it very difficult, if not impossible,

to understand the following passage on any other plan. This passage has always been counted one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament; and, indeed, it has been too difficult for any expositor that I have read, to say much upon it to any purpose. They understand the Apostle, in these verses, as speaking of the glory of the resurrection, or the glory to be revealed in heaven, after time shall be at an end; and as speaking of the inanimate, or the animal creation, or the general state of the whole creation, suffering under the effects of the fall of man, and to be finally delivered from bondage at the day of judgment, &c. But, I apprehend, there can be but little said to purpose under these ideas of the subject.

19. For the earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

In the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first verses, the Greek word κτισις is translated, the creature, but in the twenty-second verse this same word is translated creation, and it does mean either creature or creation. But the great object is for us to know what the Apostle meant by this word. The author thinks he meant the whole Gentile world, or rather every creature (if I may use the Apostle's word,) under heaven, both Jew and Gentile, who has not embraced the Gospel. Every one knows that the word, world, and the word, creature, is very frequently used figuratively to signify men, both in common conversation and in the Scriptures. Among the many instances which might be given, we select the following: John iii. 16, 17. "God so loved the world—God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved." John vii. 7. "The world cannot hate you, but me it

hateth" John xii. 47. "I came not to condemn the world, but to save the world, &c." Col. i. 6. "The Gospel which is come unto you as it is in all the world." In these texts we find the word, world, used to signify sinners of the race of Adam. In I John, iv. 5, this word is used to distinguish bad men from good men. "They are of the world, therefore they speak of the world, and the world heareth them, and v. 19. "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." In Mark, xvi. 15, the word, world, is used to signify the Gentiles as well as the Jews. "Go ye into all the world." It is evident that the word, world, (κοσμος) and the word creature, are, in such cases, used as signifying the same thing. In 2 Cor. v. 17, the word creature (κτισις) is used to signify a believer. "He who is in Christ is a new creature," to wit, a new man. See also Gal. vi. 15, and Col. i. 15. But the very words which Paul used in the twenty-second verse of the passage before us, which is translated the whole world, and the very word which is used in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first verses, and translated creature, our Lord used in Mark xvi. 15. "Go preach the Gospel to every creature," expressly meaning the Gentiles. In Matt. xxviii. 19, our Lord says: "Go ye, therefore, and teach (or disciple) all nations." Here the phrase παντα τα εθνη means the very same as πασῃ τῃ κτισει in Mark xvi. 15, and means *all the Gentiles*, or the heathen world.

On such good authority as this, we will proceed to the explanation of this difficult passage, according as we conceive the true meaning of the Apostle to be expressed in the Greek.

"For the anxious looking forward of the heathen world, waiteth for the revelation of God's children." The whole heathen world is here, by a strong figure,

represented as looking forward as with impatience, for the glorious period when they shall enjoy that revelation of the divine truths of the Gospel, which God's people enjoy, to deliver them from their wretched state of heathenish darkness, and bring them to the enjoyment of the light and privileges of the church of Christ. It is true the poor Gentiles are not sensible of the misery of their situation; but their insensibility does not make their state any better, and the Apostle viewed their unhappy state, as longing and waiting for the time of their deliverance, when they shall be blessed with the truths of the Gospel revealed to them, and be introduced into the glorious light and liberty of the kingdom of God.

20. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the *same* in hope.

Expositors give us the idea that the creation was subjected to suffer ten thousand evils, not by any sin of its own, but by Adam's sin, which subjected the whole world to a state of wretchedness and misery, but still in hope of a glorious time of deliverance at last. Such fine descriptions leave our minds laboring in darkness and confusion, and give us no ideas of the sense of the text. We cannot conceive how the creation will enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God by being all burnt up at the day of judgment; such explanations are calculated to make us sick, but not to give us light.

When God, by a sovereign determination of his most wise and holy will, chose Abraham and his posterity, by Isaac and Jacob, to be his peculiar people, he left the rest of the nations of the world (who were called Gentiles) in a state of moral darkness. The Gentiles, left of God and given up to blindness of mind, lost the

knowledge of the true God and were totally given up to idolatry. The abominable and foolish absurdity of idol-worship is peculiarly called vanity in the Scriptures; as a proof of this, see Deut. xxxii. 21; 1 Sam. xii. 21; 1 Kings, xvi. 13, 26; Ps. xxxi. 6; Isaiah xli. 29 and xliv. 9–20. Jer. viii. 19, and x. 3–5, 8, 14, 15, and xiv. 22; Jonah ii. 8; Acts xiv. 15. God's giving up the heathen world to idolatry, by judicially leaving them in a state of ignorance, is what the Apostle means by the creature being subjected to vanity.

The Gentiles were made subject to vanity not by a voluntary act of their own; it is true they voluntarily chose to worship idols; but it was God himself who chose the children of Israel for his own people, and subjected the heathen nations to a state of blindness and idolatry, and even to this day, although the Gospel is ordained to be preached to all the world, yet the time to favor the poor Gentiles has not yet fully come, and the christian world is yet comparatively, as the Apostle says, but the first fruits of the Spirit.

But although God did thus ordain, in his wise council, the heathen nations to be placed under the power of the god of this world, to worship devils and not God, (1 Cor. x. 20, 21; Lev. xvii. 7; Deut. xxxii. 16, 17,) and to suffer all the dreadful consequences of such a state of blindness, yet it is but for a time; and although the time has been long, yet it will not be always; there is still a glorious hope founded on the promise of God, left even for the deserted Gentiles, and also for the Jews, who are also now subjected to the vain imaginations of their hardened and unbelieving hearts.

21. Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

God has given a blessed hope to the church, of the accession of the whole unchristianized world; so that there is a well grounded expectation that, in due time, the outcasts of the nations, as well as of Israel and Judah, shall be delivered from their blindness, idolatry, and unbelief, and brought to a cordial surrender to the Gospel of Christ; and by faith in Jesus, they shall be redeemed from the bondage of death and ruin, in which they are involved by the fall; and by virtue of the Gospel, they shall be made to enjoy the liberty which God's children enjoy. Being delivered from the penalty of the law, and introduced into the blessed freedom of the Gospel, they shall enjoy the light of the glory of God, shining into their souls, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are also the children of God.

22. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

This is, indeed, a very strong expression. The whole Gentile world are represented as though they, in their forlorn and miserable state, were groaning together, or mingling groans with each other, longing to be delivered from their dismal state of ruin. Yea, more, they are travailing as a woman in labor, pained to be delivered. Not that the poor ignorant heathen are sensible of their misery, but their miserable state, as it were, speaks this language. Thus the Gentiles had, in a very great degree, continued for many centuries, until the time of the apostles, and, in a lamentable degree, even from that time until now. The Gospel has, indeed, spread considerably; but it is generally computed that not more than one-sixth part of mankind enjoy the light of life; and it may yet be said that we who enjoy the blessings of salvation, are but the first fruits, when compared with

the glorious harvest which the Gentiles are groaning for; and which, blessed be God, we hope they will soon enjoy.

23. And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit; even we, ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

Not only, says the Apostle; are the heathen world thus groaning under their abject and wretched circumstances, but even we, who are christians, who enjoy the degree of divine grace which the Gospel affords us under the present dispensation, which are only, as it were, the first fruits of the Gospel, compared to the enjoyments that will take place when the millenium shall come, or when we shall be done with this troublesome world; even we, who are so highly favored by the light of the Gospel, do groan under a load of imperfection, as we are yet far from enjoying a perfect deliverance from sin and corruption. We, who are engaged in the cause of the Gospel, feel so many difficulties, and have so many enemies to encounter, that our prospects would be dark, and our hopes would soon expire, were it not for the promise of Christ, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church. But we are unable to look forward, even with a groaning expectation, that the blessed time is coming, when the whole world will be adopted into the church, and the whole body of God's elect will be redeemed from the power and dominion of sin.

Also, we, as individual christians, although we have the first fruits of the Spirit in our hearts, witnessing our adoption; yet there is a body of sin still remaining in us, and therefore, we groan, being burdened, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better than all we expect to enjoy in this state of imperfection; and while we are wading through our imperfections in

this world, we long for the time to come, when we shall experience the full privileges and advantages of our adoption, even the complete redemption of our whole man from all the remains of corrupt nature. Oh! glorious hour when we shall sin no more! In hopes of this complete deliverance, we bear up under all difficulties, and even glory in our infirmities, and wait with confidence until our complete deliverance come.

24. For we are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25. But if we hope for that we see not, *then* do we with patience wait for *it*.

The christian has many troubles to wade through during his pilgrimage and warfare here, in this state of imperfection; but he is saved from despondence, despair, and apostacy, by the blessed hope with which his confidence in the promises of the Gospel inspires him, so that he is able to out-brave the attacks of every enemy, and out-ride every storm, and he is enabled to bear with difficulties under the happy prospect of a final deliverance. Hope in its nature, is fixed on objects that are in future, and not on present attainments, or enjoyments. The hope of a christian would not be worth the name, if it only related to visible objects or present attainments, neither could he bear up under all his trials, if he did not look forward to futurity. But the hope of a believer is, indeed, of the most animating nature, its object is glorious, and its foundation solid, and, therefore, he can wait for the time of future enjoyment with patience and comfort, even under present toils and discouragements.

26. Likewise, the Spirit, also helpeth our infirmities. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.

The christian has not only a good hope to strengthen and encourage him; but the Holy Spirit of God gives him his aid, and supplies his deficiencies with necessary communications of grace and strength. We, poor, ignorant creatures, often know not what we need, or what is best for us, and therefore if we were left to ourselves, we would not know how to pray; we could not sensibly feel our wants, if the Spirit did not give us proper desires. But he dwells in us, and manages our spiritual affairs; he gives suitable desires, makes us feel our wants, and encourages, and directs us in prayer; and sometimes fills us with such ardent feelings, that we want words to express our out-goings of mind, and can do nothing better than give vent to our minds by inexpressible groanings that none but ourselves and God can understand.

27. And he who searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

God, who is the searcher of hearts, needs not words to inform him of our desires; he knows our feelinga, and understands our groanings. He, therefore, perfectly knows and approves the desires his divine Spirit has wrought in our minds, because the desires which he gives to the people of God, are according and agreeable to the will of their heavenly Father.

LECTURE XIII.

ROMANS VIII. 28–32.

28. And we know that all things work together for good, to them who love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

The Apostle now enters upon one of the most comfortable doctrines that God has ever revealed in his word, to wit: the doctrine of election; a doctrine despised, ridiculed, hated, and opposed by thousands in the world.

We know, says he, that all things, all dispensations of Providence, all afflictions, persecutions, losses, crosses, disappointments, &c. shall work, one thing with another, for the real good of those who *love God.* God, in his wise and holy management of all the affairs of his people, will eventually make every occurrence turn out for the advancement of his glory, and the advantage of those who are interested in his unchangeable love and faithfulness. To make this promise a plea to encourage and indulge sin, would be a very unhappy use of this excellent text; there is, however, no doubt but God can, and often does, make even the very sinful imperfections and back-slidings of his children eventually tend to their future advantage, through the interposition of his sanctifying grace, taking occasion, by their miscarriages, to promote in them humility, penitence, heart-loathing of sin, and an humble sense of their dependence on divine grace.

The Apostle has given two characteristics of those who have a claim to the promise in the text. *They love God,* and *they are called.* The idea of loving God, without believing in Christ, is so absurd, that it will not bear a reflection. Love to God necessarily supposes an acquiescence in the Gospel, as well as a delight in him, as a God possessed of infinite excellence. Love to God consists in a delight in his holy image, and in his holy will, and in complaisance toward his people for his sake. The call of God, by which sinners are drawn to Christ, shall be explained particularly by-and-by (ver. 30.)

29. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren.

The Apostle lays down the plan on which the whole system of the Gospel depends, from first to last. He begins with God's purpose from eternity, and proceeds, step by step, until the believer is finally crowned in glory. The first item in the order laid down, is God's foreknowledge, ους προεγνω, "Those whom he did foreknow," &c.

Foreknowledge, according to the commonly received opinion of Calvinists, is that special knowledge of a person, which God has, with a view to bestow on him some special power; or, in other words, his approbating or fixing his view on a person for any purpose, or that notice which God takes of a person, in order to distinguish him from another. This general idea of foreknowledge the author has given in *the Gospel plan,* (page 52–55.) But this view of the subject, even granting it to be correct, is dark, and not very satisfactory.

But if we would honestly attend to our own plans and proceedings, we should soon discover a more deci-

sive and satisfactory definition of foreknowledge. There is no man but who acts always on this very principle in the common affairs of life; and, before he does any thing on prudential principles, he first consults his foreknowledge, in order to know whether he will decree to do it or not; for our own decrees, as well as the decrees of God, are all founded on foreknowledge. This foreknowledge is the knowledge that we have of a thing before we purpose to do it, and not the knowledge that the thing will be done. To know that a thing will be, is, indeed, a kind of fereknowledge, and this is what is commonly meant by the word, in common conversation. But the proper sense in which the Apostle's used this word is the knowledge of a thing that we have, previous to our doing it, and on which we decree to do it.

For instance—a farmer sows his field, because he previously knows that so doing he may expect a crop. A man determines to build a house from the knowledge he has of the nature, and benefit of a house; and he purposes to build of wood, stone, or brick, because he knows, previously, the quality of either of these materials, and also his capacity and convenience for building. A mechanic chooses his materials to accomplish any particular piece of work, because he previously knows what will answer the purpose the best. I step my feet when I walk, because I previously know that stepping will convey me from one place to another. I next purpose to ride, because I know my horse will carry me quicker and easier than to walk. A gold-smith purposes to make a ring; he chooses his materials, he reprobates clay, wood, stone, iron and silver, and every thing else that he knows will not answer his purpose; but he chooses gold, because he previously knows it is a suitable metal; he, therefore, proceeds exactly upon the plan

stated in this text. The metal that he foreknew would suit his purpose, he did, also, predestinate to be made into a ring; that it might adorn the hand of some person who should choose to wear it. Moreover, the same piece that he did predestinate, he also fashioned into a ring, and the same ring he polished, and made fit for the purpose he intended. A man wishes to fix on a good tract of land, and, from his foreknowledge of what kind of a plantation would suit him, he determines on a certain tract—he buys it, moves on it, and cultivates it. Now, this man's whole plan is founded on his foreknowledge. His previous knowledge of what was necessary for a comfortable settlement—such as rich, fertile soil, good water, a good site for a dwelling house, good timber, &c. directs him in his choice, and determination. He passes by one tract, because it is poor; and then another, because it is stony; another, because it lacks water, &c. but he chooses this particular tract, because his knowledge dictates to him that it will answer the end he has in view. Now, this man proceeds exactly on the Apostle's plan. That tract of land which he knows by his previous knowledge of land and its appurtenances will suit him, he elects, and predestinates, to be the place where he will fix his habitation, and this said tract which he predestinates, he procures, and makes his own, and that tract which he procures he settles upon, and that tract on which he settles, he improves and cultivates; but the whole is founded on his foreknowledge.

From these instances, we see that all our rational plans and proceedings are predicated on our knowledge that we previously have of things, and it plainly shows us that there is a very important kind of foreknowledge which is very different from merely knowing beforehand that any particular thing will come to pass. We find

that this foreknowledge is our previous knowledge about any thing, which induces us to turn our attention to it, and enter upon plans and resolutions to act accordingly, and there is scarcely an action any man prudently performs in his whole life, but what is dependent on his foreknowledge.

Now, we find from the Scriptures that God, in his infinite knowledge, acts on the very same plan, and, indeed, it is impossible for any intelligent being to act upon any other, if he would act rationally; because, to act upon any other principle, would be mere folly, and wild, fortuitous frenzy. How would it look for any rational being to act without any knowledge or foresight. It is true, we poor, short-sighted mortals sometimes act without knowledge; but such actions are always counted foolish, uncertain, or a mere lottery. But God, who is possessed of infinite knowledge, must be perfectly acquainted with every possible circumstance from eternity. His knowledge not only comprehends all things that have existed, or ever will exist, but he knows every thing possible to be brought into existence. He knows the tendency, and all the bearings of every thing that could possibly be done. This is God's foreknowledge, and he possessed it from eternity, before he ever formed a creature. Thus, we clearly see that God, being possessed of infinite foreknowledge of every possible thing, must always act by, or according to this foreknowledge, and it is impossible for him to do otherwise, unless he would wilfully and knowingly act foolishly, by acting contrary to his knowledge; for he must of necessity either act with or against his knowledge, for he knows every thing, and, of course, he must always be infinitely wise, or infinitely foolish, in all his actions; for wisdom is to act according to cor-

rect knowledge, and folly is to act contrary to knowledge. But God always acts with infinite wisdom, and consequently he always acts according to his infinite foreknowledge.

Thus we see plainly that God predestinated those whom he foreknew would best answer the great purpose he had in view; his infinite knowledge dictated to him whom to choose, and whom to pass by. We must consider that God always acts for his own glory, and whatever will glorify him most, he will always do, and he most perfectly knows what will most redound to his glory. If the salvation of the whole race of Adam would have been most to the glory of God, he would, undoubtedly, have adopted that plan. But he saw it best to save only a part of mankind; and he, by his infinite knowledge, perfectly knew what part, and what particular persons would be most to his glory to save. Therefore, upon this infinite foreknowledge he predestinated whom he foreknew would answer his divine purpose the best.

His particular purpose, in predestinating those whom he foreknew, was, that he might sanctify them, and bring them to wear the image, or likeness, of Jesus Christ, his dear Son, their Redeemer. Thus God, προωρισε, predestinated, that is, set apart beforehand, or previously ordained, whom he foreknew, in order, or with a design, that these particular persons, thus ordained, should, by his grace, be made holy, as Christ is holy; that their glorious Redeemer might be the first born among, or connected with, many who were thus chosen to be his brethren, united to him in this happy relation. Thus the Apostle first states God's plan; his gracious design is revealed, as founded on his infinite knowledge of all things.

30. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

The Apostle having stated the divine purpose of God in predestinating his people, he next states the process in which God had ordained to bring his divine purpose to effect. He first *calls them.* God grants the common calls of the Gospel to all who hear it, or read it, without distinction. Here a difficulty arises: we cannot see why God calls those who are not elected, when he never intended to bring them to salvation. I can only tell the honest reader that if I knew I would honestly tell him; but inasmuch as I know not, I can only say, honestly, that I know nothing about it. But I know that God does so, because he says so in his word, and I believe it; but why he does so, is best known to himself; but we know that whatever God does is right, whether we understand it or not.

But the plan of God is, to bring his elect to Christ. This he does by the influences of his Spirit attending his word. The word of God is the special means of convincing and converting sinners. There are many ways by which the word is administered—reading, conversation, the recollection of truth which we have read or heard from the word; but God has ordained that the preaching of the word should especially be the means of drawing sinners to Christ.

The reader will please to notice that it is the peculiar part of God, the Father, to bring, or draw sinners to Christ, and none ever will come to him, except the Father draw them, and every one will come whom the Father draws, and that the Father will draw every one whom he has given to his Son. This is clearly proved by John vi. 44, 45, 65: "No one can come unto me,

except the Father draw him." "They shall be taught of God; therefore, every one who heareth, and learneth of the Father, cometh unto me." "But no one can come unto me, except it were given him of my Father." Compare this with the thirty-seventh verse. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." Christ cannot grant any of the benefits of salvation to any sinner, until he believes on him. "He who believeth not, shall be damned. Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life. If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins. He who believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him." These texts effectually prove that no man can receive any benefit from Christ, until he is interested in him by faith.

When the Holy Spirit comes to convince a sinner, God, the Father, sends him. The Spirit of truth, when he comes, is indeed a comforter, a witness, a seal, and an earnest to the people of God for carrying on the work of sanctification in their hearts; but he is a reprover, and a convincer to sinners. He first convinces of sin, and then of righteousness, until he effectually persuades the sinner to believe on Christ. First, the sinner is brought to a sense of his lost state by nature; he sees and feels his guilt and wretchedness, and is made sensible of his need of a Saviour. He is then called by the teachings of the Spirit to behold Christ, in the Gospel, freely offered to him, as an all-sufficient Redeemer, able and willing to save, to the uttermost, all who will come to him, receive him, and trust to him, for the entire salvation of their souls. The poor sinner is thus drawn to Christ by the arguments and motives of the word of God, brought home to his heart, and obtains a saving interest in Jesus; and thus he is *called of God*, and God proceeds upon his plan, to bring his own purpose to pass, according to the counsel of his own will.

Here a very important enquiry may arise: How can the Spirit be legally sent to enlighten, or convince a sinner, when his divine influences are forfeited by the penalty of the law? To be satisfied on this point, we are to consider that there are two classes of divine influences, one to convince the sinner, and the other to renew, or sanctify, the believer. The sentence of the law is spiritual death; so that spiritual life is the thing that is forfeited. Therefore, the sanctifying operations of the Spirit cannot be granted to the sinner while ever he is under the penalty. But the law cannot prohibit anything that is consistent with this penalty, neither can it legally prohibit anything to be done to the condemned sinner, but only that which would tend to rescue him from the sentence, without suffering the penalty, that is, the sentence of the law must not be counteracted; but anything besides this is lawful. Now, it is easy to see, that for the Spirit to renew the heart, to change the mind from sin to holiness, would be giving spiritual life, and would be rescuing the soul from the sentence of the law, "Thou shalt surely die." This, therefore, before the soul is brought from under the penalty, is totally inadmissible, and contrary to every principle of law and justice. But to convince a sinner that he has broken the law, that he is guilty, that he deserves to die, and that he shall die, that the law is just, and ought and must be satisfied; and consequently, to show the sinner that he is in a woful case, under the curse and penalty of the law of God is perfectly right and lawful; all this is consistent with the sentence of justice.

Moreover, to provide a Redeemer who would, and could, answer the penal demands of the law, would be quite admissible, because the law admits of a surety; and when the surety had stepped in, and had answered

every demand of justice, and fully endured the penalty, it would certainly be legal to propose the full atonement to the culprit, for his legal discharge, and to press his acquiescence in the gracious plan. Not one of all these things would counteract the sentence of justice, or in the least degree infringe upon the rights of the law. This is what the divine Spirit does in calling a sinner to Christ; and all this is done without giving a single particle of spiritual life to the soul.

This matter is clearly seen in the procedures of our courts of justice. When a felon is condemned to death, he is generally granted some time, before the hour of execution. Now, death is the sentence of the law, to be executed on whatever day the judge sees fit to ordain. During the given time of respite, it is lawful to do many things, and, indeed, anything that has no tendency to rescue the prisoner from the execution of the sentence, in an unlawful way. It would be no breach of the law for any one to tell him that he was a felon, that he must certainly die, that he was guilty, that he had acted contrary to a just law, that his sentence was just, that he ought to suffer for his wickedness. And if these upbraidings would sink deep into his heart, and produce the deepest conviction, trouble, remorse and anxiety, under a sense of his guilt and the terrors of death, there would be nothing done contrary to law. But if his friends should knock off his fetters, or open the prison door, the law would stand in full force against him.

Neither would the sentence of the court hinder a petition to be signed and sent to the governor for a reprieve, inasmuch as there is provision made in the law for that purpose. And if capital cases were bailable, the sentence of the judge would not hinder a surety to be introduced, who would answer the penal demands of justice.

On this ground, a treaty of reconciliation might be legally entered into, and terms of release might be proposed to the condemned culprit, all in a perfect consistency with the principles of justice, seeing the penalty could be vicariously answered, and the life of the culprit saved; and when the conditions were acceded to, then, and not till then, the prisoner could be legally discharged, and he would be admitted to enjoy the common blessings of a free citizen.

So the Spirit of God can convince the condemned sinner, although the penalty of the law stands against him, and persuade him to receive Christ, without granting a single blessing forfeited by being subject to the penalty of the law. Although he cannot give him spiritual life, till the penalty is removed, yet he can bring him to consent to be saved from death, by the death of an all-sufficient surety. Thus, we see, that God can call a sinner, and, by his Spirit, dispose him to believe, and still act legally, and in perfect consistency with the principles of the strictest justice, and the dignity of his moral government.

"Whom he called, them he also justified." Whenever a sinner is effectually called, and believes in Christ, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and through the infinite merit of the atonement he is justified. He is considered righteous, or perfectly innocent, free from the charge of guilt, and is pronounced acquitted from his state of condemnation, and is received and acknowledged by God as a child, and made an heir, and a joint heir with Christ.

"And whom he justified, them he also glorified." Divines generally explain this glory to mean that state of perfect glory and happiness which the people of God will enjoy in heaven above. It must, indeed, be granted,

that this glorious state will be the issue of the work of God, in saving sinners. But I can see no reason why we should not understand the word glorify to mean sanctify. If the Apostle, by this word, does not mean sanctification, he has left out this very important article in his plan of salvation; and the author cannot be persuaded that a link so important as this is, would be left out of his beautiful chain.

Holiness is the glory of God; holiness is the glory of the heavenly state; holiness is the glory of saints and angels, in a perfect state in heaven, and holiness is the glory of a christian in this world. It must then be evident that when God renews and sanctifies a believer, he makes him possess a degree of the same glory that he himself possesses. Christians are conformed to the glorious image of Christ; Christ is not only infinitely holy in his divine perfections, as God, but he is perfectly holy, harmless, undefiled, and the contrast of sinners, in his humanity, and this is his glory, and when christians are conformed to his image they are glorified; consequently, when God sanctifies his people, and transforms them to his holy image, he glorifies them; and he carries on this glorifying work of sanctification until it is finished in perfect holiness, and glory in heaven. This is certainly the Apostle's idea, and it is in perfect harmony with other texts of Scripture, which speak of the holy state of believers as glorious. "The kings daughter is all glorious within," (Ps. xlv. 13;) "that he may sanctify and cleanse *his church* and present it—a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish," (Eph. v. 26, 27.) "We behold the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

"As his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue." (2 Pet. i. 3.) These things sufficiently satisfy my mind that sanctification is meant by the word glorify; but, still we must consider that this glory is only begun in this world, but will be perfect in heaven, where the saints will be completely and eternally glorified.

Then the plan which the Apostle lays down is this: 1. foreknowledge; 2d. predestination; 3d. calling; 4th. justification; and 5th. glorification. The first is God's infinite knowledge of all possible things, by which he was directed to ordain what he saw was best. The second, is his foreordaining those particular persons whom he foreknew would answer his purpose, to bring them, through Christ his Son, to be made holy. The third, is his calling those particular persons by the power of his divine grace to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ. The fourth, is his justifying those whom he had called, and the fifth, is his sanctifying those whom he had justified, and, finally, making them completely glorious in his divine image, in the blessed mansions of eternal felicity.

This is evidently the Apostle's doctrine clearly stated, and as evidently asserted as any doctrine is, or can be, in all the Bible; and any man who can deny the doctrine of particular election, after what Paul, the inspired Apostle, has said in this passage, can, with equal propriety, and with equal ease, and also, with equal effrontery, and barefaced contradiction of the word of God, deny any doctrine contained in the Scriptrues of the Old and New Testament. Some deny the divinity of Christ, some deny the resurrection of the body, some deny justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ,

some deny the christian Sabbath, some deny the propriety of the administration of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, some deny salvation by grace, and not by works, some deny infant church membership. But all these denominations in denying these things do not contradict the Holy Scriptures one whit more, than Arminians do, in denying the doctrine of election. There is hardly any thing that more evinces the contrariety of the mind of man, to the will of God, than the thousands of objections that are raised against this doctrine. It seems as if a man could admit his Maker to do any thing, sooner than he can allow him to save whom he pleases; this he must not do. Rather than admit that God designs to save those whom he has given to his Son, and to leave others to die in their sins, they will contradict every principle of reason and common sense; they will contradict the whole conduct of God, in his evidently granting the Gospel to some, and denying it to others; they will contradict the Apostle Paul—yea, they will contradict the open and evident declarations of God in his word.

31. What shall we, then, say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?

If, then, God, acting upon his most perfect knowledge of all possible things, with all their relations, connections, and bearings one with another, has predestinated us to be formed for his glory; and if he has in the prosecution of his own plans, effectually called us, by his all powerful grace to his dear Son, that we might be united to him by faith; and if in consequence of this union, he has justified us freely through the righteousness of Christ, and made us his children, and joint heirs with Christ, to the boundless benefits and blessings of

his kingdom; and if he is glorifying us, by his sanctifying Spirit, and preparing us for the enjoyments of the heavenly world; what can we say to such a train of things, as is here presented to our view? What can we say against this wonderful plan? And what shall we not say, in approbation of, and confidence in, such a plan as this? Indeed, all we can say is, if God, on such grounds, and in his desire and unchangeable purpose, be for us—who, in heaven, earth, or hell, can be against us? So that nothing can do us any real harm. The world may oppose, our lusts may rebel, and Satan may rage, and employ all his skill, power, and malice against us—God's people will, and shall be conducted in perfect safety to the realms of eternal glory.

32. He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him, also, freely give us all things?

Nothing can surpass, either the energy, or the beauty of this text. The Apostle had asserted that it was impossible for any thing to do a real injury to the people of God. In this verse he brings forward an argument, by way of interrogation, that no man on principles of common sense could possibly overthrow; proving, that as nothing could do harm to a christian, so, on the other hand, nothing could induce God to withhold any real good thing from those who were reconciled to him through the death of his dear Son. God has granted the greatest gift in sending his Son to die for us; and seeing he did not spare, but deliver up his own Son to death in our room; how can it be possible that he could withhold any good thing from those who are interested in the merits of his death.

We are to consider this argument in two points of view. First, it is an argument drawn from the greater

to the less. If God has already granted the greatest gift he could bestow, surely he cannot withhold all necessary graces, which are of an inferior nature, and which are granted as consequences of the great gift of his Son. Again, seeing God has given his own Son to die for us, how can he, when we are interested in him withhold from us those benefits that his Son has purchased for us, now, when we have a just and legal claim to all things through the merits of our blessed surety?

Indeed, nothing that we can say, can add any thing to the divine dignity of this text. It stands alone with such clearness, beauty, and energy, that no commentator can add any thing to its advantage.

> "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
> Is laid for your faith in his excellent word."

LECTURE XIV.

ROMANS VIII. 33-39.

33. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? God who justifieth?

34. Who *is* he who condemneth? Christ who died? Yea, rather, who is risen again? Who is even at the right hand of God? Who, also, maketh intercession for us?

This whole passage, to the end of the chapter, is so exceedingly grand, sublime, and so profoundly eloquent, that the author will not attempt to say any thing more on it, than just to make some observations.

I have followed the pointing recommended by Dr. Saml. Harris, as a very natural construction of the Greek, and far more expressive of the divine sublimity of the Apostle, than supplying the two little frigid words, *it is*, as the translators have done.

Such a bold challenge given to the whole universe, would justly be considered as fulsome ostentation, and presumptuous arrogance, if used in any common case, or on any common ground. But for an inspired Apostle, to use such language, speaking in the name of God, in the case of God's elect, and, on the ground of God's election, and of his justifying them through the death of Christ, who is risen from the dead, and is seated at the right hand of God, and there making intercession for them, makes it one of the most agreeable, and fine pieces

of eloquence that can be found in the records of the Bible. Who is the subject? *God's elect*, whom he foreknew, and had predestinated, or ordained to salvation; and whom he had called according to his purpose, and whom he had justified through Christ, his dear Son, and to whom he had given his Spirit to carry on a work of sanctification, until it be completed in heaven. What is the object? The perfect security of *God's elect*, and the impossibility of their coming into condemnation, or losing their claim to eternal life. What are the grounds of this universal challenge? There are two special grounds stated by the Apostle; one is, the decision of such a judge as God is, who is the Supreme Governor and judge of the world, and he, who sways an uncontrollable sceptre over universal nature, justifying the believer, from whose decisions there can be no appeal, "God who justifieth," could never condemn whom he has acquitted from every possible allegation of guilt. The other ground, is the death, resurrection, exaltation, and intercession of Christ, as the proper ground on which the believer is set perfectly free from condemnation, and fully acquitted on the most correct principles of justice; so that no possible accusation can, on any score, be relevant against him, Then, it must be evident, that no person whatever, who has an interest in Christ, can possibly be condemned; "Christ who died" will not condemn him; "Christ who is risen again" will not condemn him; "Christ who is even at the right hand of God" will not condemn him, "Christ who even maketh intercession for him" will not condemn him. And with such an advocate, with such a plea, at the right hand of such a God, the elect of God can never possibly come into condemnation.

What! On such ground as this, can any of God's

elect finally fall from a state of grace, and be condemned and lost forever! If this Arminian doctrine of falling from grace be true, then, "Paul, cease thine impertinent prattle; desist from, and recant thy fulsome, bombastic cant, and petulent nonsense! Thou art a deceiver, and an Apostle of the father of lies, who was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth." This is not the language of the Arminians, but only of their doctrine. But the venerable Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ replies with his wonted firmness, (Gal. i. 8,) "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel, than that which we have preached, let him be accursed."

35. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36. (As it is written—for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.)

37. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us.

This is another bold challenge given to all the powers of earth and hell, that should attempt to separate the people of God from the unchangeable love of Christ. An interrogation, that does not demand an answer, by way of inquiry, is a strong figure which implies a confident appeal to common sense. An interrogation in the positive, implies a strong negative, and when in the negative, it implies a strong answer in the positive.

The Apostle first put the general question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The answer implied is, nothing can. He then carries on the question, and applies it to particular circumstances, shall θλίψις, tribulation, or any kind of affliction? Shall στενοχωρια, distress, or straitened circumstances? Shall διωγμος, per-

secution? Shall λιμος famine, or rather, hunger? Shall γυμνοτης nakedness? Shall κινδυνος, peril, or danger? Shall μαχαιρα the sword? the civil sword, which was often drawn to shed the blood of the martyrs. Shall any of these things, or any such things separate us from the love of Christ? (v. 37.) Nay, truly, the Apostle answers with his usual energy of style, but in all these, and all such trials, and temptations, we are more than conquerors; that is, we not only overcome, but we are honorable conquerors, and we get a glorious victory, yea, we gain a victory that will do honor, and will redound to the glory of the captain of our salvation, who hath loved us, and will love us to the end; and it is through his unchangeable love, and indissoluble attachment to us, that we triumph over all our enemies.

(v. 36.) It is true, the Apostle admits, that the elect of God are exposed to the very worst of difficulties and dangers, and are surrounded with reproaches and temptations, so that they can adopt the language of the Psalmist, (Psalm. xliv. 22,) who complains in the name of the church, that for the sake of religion, and their attachment to the Gospel, God's people were exposed to death continually, and many of them had to suffer martyrdom, and were accounted as sheep in the market-place appointed for the slaughter. Yet, the unchangeable love of Christ carried them through all these difficulties, and would finally give them a glorious victory.

38. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come.

39. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.

What a surprising assemblage of things are here enumerated; comprehending all possible occurrences that can be imagined to stand in the christian's way. And

yet, the Apostle is fully persuaded, and firm in the belief, that not one imaginable thing, nor all put together, could possibly separate God's children from his everlasting love, which he is pleased to bestow on them, for the sake of Jesus Christ, his dear Son.

But, to look at the particulars which the Apostle has enumerated, it is evident, that he was at pains to collect, every thing that could be conceived of, in the whole compass of existence, that would or could assail the child of God; but nothing could finally prevail against him.

"Neither θανατος, death;" the fear of death, death itself, and the dark abodes of the grave, nor all the circumstances, and consequences of death. "Nor ζωη, life;" our love, or natural attachment to life, nor any of the occurrences of life, or the dangers, troubles, temptations, and all the weaknesses and imperfections that attend this life. "Nor αγγελοι, angels;" the happy angels in heaven would not oppose the people of God, therefore, the Apostle did not suppose danger from that quarter. The word angels applies to wicked angels—even the wicked spirits in hell, who are the grand enemies of Christ and his people. "Nor αρχαι, principalities;" even old Beelzebub the prince of the devils, nor all the higher orders of those infernal spirits, as well as the inferior grades." "Nor δυναμεις, powers;" those infernals who possess the greatest capacities, cunning, or subtilty; and perhaps, the Apostle may, also, include the rulers, and governing powers among men, as well as devils. "Nor ενεςωτα things present;" any thing, and all things, existing in the present time. "Nor μελλοντα, things to come;" all things whatsoever that are to exist, or ever will be hereafter. "Nor νψωμα, height;" the most elevated prosperity, or any thing exalted, or placed in high eminence. "Nor βαθος depth;" the lowest state

of adversity, or oppression, or the lowest possible condition either of mind or body. "Nor τις κτισις ετερα any other creature." Not one, or all of the things, that ever was or will, or can be created, or exist in the whole creation of God; if any thing can be conceived as possible, which is not included in the above enumeration; none, of all these things, nor the whole force of them together, shall be capable of separating God's elect from his love in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Oh! what divine consolation is contained in this blessed passage of Scripture!—especially from the twenty-eighth verse to the end of the chapter. The salvation of the elect of God is sure, and nothing in heaven, earth, or hell, will, or can prevent it; but everything must conspire to make them eternally happy in the everlasting enjoyment of the love of God. It is a matter of great importance, indeed, to be interested in the love of God. To be chosen of God, and appointed, not to wrath, but to obtain salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, is a privilege not to be forgotton, or neglected. It is to be feared that christians, taken up with the rich variety of grace which they have received from God, pay too little attention to the main spring of all their joys, to wit: God's eternal purpose to save them, which he purposed in Christ before the world began. Oh! what distinguishing love! what unmerited grace! what unaccountable goodness! what free mercy, it was that God was pleased not to pass me by, and leave me to perish in my sin, but to make me one of the chosen number, and an object of his everlasting love. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

If a sinner is conscious of the inward work of the Spirit of God, convincing him of sin, and drawing him to Christ; and if he has felt his heart surrendering to

Jesus, and consenting to be saved through his righteousness only; if he is sensible of a renewed mind in him; that he is disposed in his heart to love God and holiness, to repent of and hate sin; if he is disposed to mourn over his daily imperfections and short-comings; if he loves the people of God, and feels a delight in the services of God, he may rest satisfied that he is one of God's elect, and he may trust to the unchangeable love and faithfulness of God, and be confidently assured that nothing in heaven, earth, or hell, can separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Confidence in God is a solemn duty, enjoined on us by the word of God. But confidence, on improper ground, is presumption, and tends to indulge sin and sloth, and will finally deceive. But if a person has believed in Christ, he is called of God, and is consequently chosen of God, predestinated, not to live in sin, but to be conformed to the image of his Son. Therefore, it is not presumption, but a duty and privilege, for such an one to trust in God, because God will bring his purpose to pass, and will carry on his work in his chosen people, and will finally complete it in glory. Blessed be God for the glorious doctrine of election; and blessed is the man who is predestinated to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The comfortable doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, is most effectually established by the Apostle in this passage of Scripture. If a man is satisfied as to his calling, he may, of course, be satisfied as to his election; and, consequently, he can have no doubt as to his final perseverance. This is, indeed, the only proper ground of the christian's comfort and rejoicing. A believer may have a flow of feelings, and he may be happy in the possession of those agreeable sensations; but,

alas, how soon are those happy sensations gone; and if this were all the ground of our hope, we would be poor, indeed. But when our comfort arises from a well grounded confidence in God, who, according to his eternal purpose, has chosen us to eternal life, and who has given us great and precious promises that he will carry on his work, by his own wisdom, power and grace, as he has purposed in Christ Jesus; then our confidence is good, and we can be comfortable, let our passions and affections ebb, or flow. And while we maintain our trust and hope in the faithfulness and truth of God's word, we, like the Apostle, can challenge the whole universe, and smile at the vain attempts of the devil, the world, and the flesh, to separate us from the love of God.

We laugh at the feeble attempts of the Arminians to explain away the natural meaning of this passage. We know what the Apostle means; we know that he intended to tell us that God saves his people according to his own plan; that he chose and ordained those whom he saw proper, to salvation; that he will, by effectual calling, justification by faith in Christ, and by the sanctification of his divine Spirit, bring them to eternal glory, and that nothing can withstand, or defeat his purpose; that no accusation can be relevant against them; and that they shall come off even more than conquerors; and that nothing shall ever be able to separate the everlasting love of God from his chosen people, whom he is determined to save, according to his own purpose of grace, which he purposed in Christ before the world was brought into existence.

LECTURE XV.

ROMANS IX. 1–24.

1. I say the truth in Christ; I lie not, my conscience, also, bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,
2. That I have great heaviness, and continual sorrow in my heart;
3. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.

The Apostle is now entering upon a very feeling subject. It is evident that, by the manner in which he had treated the subject of the Gospel, stating the insufficiency of all the Jewish types and sacrifices, in point of justification, and proving that all, both Jew and Gentiles, were in a state of sin, he bore very hard against the Jewish nation. But the Apostle declares, in the sincerity of his heart, and by a solemn appeal to God, and his own conscience, that it was a truth that he was not influenced by any degree of hatred or disaffection to the nation of Israel; but that he spoke of them as he had done, and as he had to do, in carrying out his arguments on the doctrine of predestination, from a solemn regard to truth; and that, while he was bound to declare the honest truth, as it was revealed to him, respecting the casting off of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, it affected him with genuine grief and continual sorrow in his affectionate heart, to think of their deplorable situation, so that he was even willing to be crucified, and could heartily wish that he could prevail with the

nation of Israel to receive the Gospel, even at the expense of his own life; for he could be suspended on a cross, as Christ was, if it would deliver his brethren, the Jews, from the dreadful ruin which he foresaw was coming upon them, for rejecting the Gospel.

In Deut. xxi. 22, 23, it is stated in the law of Moses—"If a man be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, thou shalt in anywise bury him that day, for he who is hanged, is accursed of God." From this law Christ is said to be accursed, because he hung on the cross, and the cross is called the tree, and the death of Christ is called the cursed death of the cross; so, to be crucified, was to be accursed. Thus it appears that Paul could wish to be accursed, that is, crucified, απο χτιϛε, not *from* Christ, but after the manner of Christ; that is, he could submit to be crucified, to die an accursed death, according to the law of Moses, as Christ did, if it would reclaim the Jews from their infidelity. We must remember that the mere form of crucifixion was no part of the atonement, although it was the mode in which Christ chose to die, when he made the atonement.

The Apostle John says, (1 John iii. 16:) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;" that is, we ought to love the church, the body of christians, to that degree, that if the cause of the Gospel, the interest of the church, required it, we should be willing to die—even to die in any mode—should it be the cursed death of the cross, for the furtherance of the cause in which all our brethren are engaged. The Apostle Paul felt this degree of love for his old brethren, the Jewish church.

In 2 Tim. i. 3, we have an instance of Paul's using the preposition απο, as we have translated it above, "I

thank God, whom I serve, απο προγονων, from my forefathers;" that is, whom I serve, according as my pious ancestors did.

Thus we have no reason to believe that Paul was guilty of such an unnatural and wicked wish, as to desire, or even to be willing to be eternally separated from Christ, and to have his lot with wicked blasphemers in hell forever. But we find that he was only willing, if need so required, to manifest his love to the cause of Christ and his attachment to the Jews, if they would become christians to be accounted accursed, by being crucified as Christ was; and this perfectly agrees with the directions of St. John, as stated above.

4. Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law and the services of God, and the promises.

5. Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

In order to manifest his peculiar attachment to the Jewish nation, as the once peculiar people of God, the Apostle enumerates their peculiar privileges. They were Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, who wrestled and prevailed with God, and obtained the blessing. They were the chosen and adopted family of God, taken under his fatherly care and protection. The peculiar manifestations of the glory of God belonged to them, and the ark of the covenant, which was called the glory of God, and the Shechinah which rested on the mercy seat, (1 Saml. iv. 21, 22; Ps. lxxviii. 60, 61,) and also the solemn ratification of the covenant established with Abraham, renewed with Isaac and with Jacob, and with Moses and the national covenant, and that established with David, by which they held the promised land, and looked for their Messiah to come and sit on the throne

of David; also the splendid and awful promulgation of the moral and ceremonial law, as the condition of their national covenant, made at Mount Horeb, or Sinai. This law pointed out the service which God required of them as his people, both as to morality and their attendance on their ceremonial institutions. They had also given to them, not only the engagements of God's care, protection and blessing, as a people, but also the repeated promises relative to the Messiah, and the glory of the church of Christ in his reign.

He also states that the long line of honorable ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, and all the prophets, belonged to them. But, to crown the whole, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the glorious Son of God, the Saviour of the world, came of them, as to his humanity, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. Who, as to his human nature, was descended from Abraham and David, according to the promise, but was, in his divine nature, the ever blessed God, the great governor and protector of universal nature.

This is a pointed and express proof of the divinity, as well as the humanity of Christ. As a man, he was descended from Israel, and as God, he was over all and blessed forever; and the word, Amen, is a solemn act of reverence by which the Apostle acknowledged, and calls upon the church to acknowledge, the divine glory and dignity of Jesus Christ.

This enumeration of so many great and glorious things as belonging to the Jews, was a clear manifestation of the Apostles high respect to the Jewish nation, and fully evinced his love to them, and his tender regard for their welfare.

6. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect; for they are not all Israel, who are of Israel.

To look at the covenants and promises which God gave to his people, Israel, one would expect that a nation, who enjoyed all the advantages which are enumerated above, would be blessed above all people. But, instead of this, the Jews were about to be rejected as a nation, and cast out of the church into a state of wretchedness and misery. But, says the Apostle, we are not hence to conclude that the promises of God's word have failed and come to naught. But, on the proper principles of the sovereign election of God, he has fulfilled his word to those who are the true Israel of God. For we are to consider that only a remnant of those who belonged to the nation of Israel, are God's chosen people; they all did, indeed, belong to the nation which he had chosen and adopted, and were included in the national covenant; but none but those whom he pre-ordained to become believers are his chosen people, according to the special covenant made with Abraham. Thus God not only chose Israel to be his covenanted people, as a nation distinguished from the nations of the earth, but also he had his chosen ones among them, whom he had pre-ordained to be heirs by faith of the blessings of the covenant of grace.

7. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, *are they* all children; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called;

8. That is, they who are the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9. For this is the word of promise: At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

Believers only are really the children of Abraham, not only those of the Gentiles, but even of the Jews themselves. Although God gave the promise to Abraham and his seed, yet only a chosen remnant of his seed was intended, even as to the national blessings of the cove-

nant, and but a remnant of that remnant was chosen of God to enjoy the spiritual benefits promised to Abraham. The mere natural children of Abraham, according to the flesh, were not counted his seed; but Jesus was a child of special promise, and was chosen of God to be the heir, by faith, with Abraham, of the saving blessings of the covenant. Ishmael and the sons of Keturah were excluded, and Isaac only was accounted the heir of the promise. By this reasoning, the Apostle showed that God acted as a sovereign, and dispensed his blessings as he saw fit, and according to his own choice. Abraham plead hard for his son, Ishmael; but God must act, not by Abraham's will, but by his own, and Isaac must be the seed, and not Ishmael (Gen. xvii. 18–21.) Here we see that Isaac was distinguished as the seed upwards of twenty years before he was begotten (see Gen. xii. 4, 7, and xv. 2–6, and xvii. 1, 7, 15–17, and xxi. 5;) and although Ishmael was Abraham's first-born son, and thirteen years old when Isaac was born, yet Isaac was chosen to be the seed, and Ishmael was cast out.

10. And not only *this*, but when Rebecca had conceived, by one, *even* by our father, Isaac.

11. For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him who calleth;

12. It was said unto her: The elder shall serve the younger.

13. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

God also saw fit to make a difference even in the posterity of Isaac, and this divine purpose was made known before he had any seed. When Rebecca had conceived, she had twins in her womb. Here were two children, begotten by one man, even by the patriarch Isaac, who were both perfectly free from moral action, either good or evil, and only to be considered in their fallen state,

in common with the rest of mankind, both equally guilty of original sin by imputation, and having nothing in the one more than the other, to influence the will of God. While the children were in this state, even before they were born, God declared his unchangeable purpose to Rebecca: "The elder shall serve the younger." Although Esau, who was the first-born, had the right of primogeniture, as Ishmael had, yet the council of God must stand; Jacob, the younger, must heir the blessing of Abraham, and Esau must be cast out of God's covenant. This very convincing circumstance exactly accords with what God said by his prophet, (Mal. i. 2, 3,) "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob; and I hated Esau."

It is evident that Isaac and Jacob were pious men, and it is most probable that both Ishmael and Esau were wicked men. Ishmael mocked Isaac, and for this, was cast out by the order of God, under the declaration that he should not be heir with Isaac. Esau profanely sold his birth-right, and lost the blessing of his father, and was also cast out of the covenant. But not to insist on this personal circumstance, the Apostle's argument is clearly maintained, to wit, that God acts according to election, and that he does not predestinate his people according to their works, but according to his own will, who is pleased to call those to himself, whom he chooses to separate for himself, and ordain them to answer his own purpose.

But it is said that God made choice of Isaac and Jacob, and so of all other believers, upon the account of some foreseen good in them, and not from the determination of his own will. Such an objection is hardly worth a reply. Mankind are universally degenerated, so that not one would ever do good, if he were not induced

thereunto by the free grace of God. A man must be created unto good works in Christ Jesus, before he will perform good works. God might, indeed, foresee evil in a degenerate, fallen creature, because nothing would be necessary but to let him alone, and his natural disposition would lead him to evil. But how could God foresee good works in an evil man, except he should also foresee that he would change his heart? But how could God foresee that he would change a man's heart, unless he intended to do it? But God could not intend to change a sinner's heart, without an eternal and unchangeable purpose to do so. Therefore, this objection to the Apostle's doctrine of election is idle and totally inadmissible. The Apostle says that God loved Jacob, and hated Esau, independent of good works, that his purpose of election might stand by the mere will of him who calleth, and not of works. If God had let Jacob alone, as no doubt he did Esau, Jacob would have been no better than Esau; and, no doubt, he foresaw that Jacob would be a good man; but it was because he intended, by his grace, to make him so. So, it is plain, that no fallen creature can be good except on the Apostle's plan of predestination.

14. What shall we say, then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

When an objection is offered against a doctrine, it proves that the objector considers the doctrine to be false. And when a man procceds to reply to the objection, it proves that the replier believes the doctrine to be true, or he would not reply. Here the Apostle supposes an objector to say, that God would be unrighteous, if he proceeded on the plan proposed. How would he be un-

righteous? Because, says the objector, he would be partial in his favors, giving to one, and withholding from another; choosing one, and passing by another; purposing to save one, and leaving another to perish, and not using all alike.

Now, as this objection is evidently levelled against the doctrine of election, and as St. Paul proceeded to reply to it; this very circumstance proves that Paul was in favor of this very doctrine. Thus we have not only the Apostle's declarations and arguments, proving the doctrine to be true, but we have his opinion. This very thing is as good as a thousand arguments to those who believe, and consider that St. Paul was an inspired apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But Paul expressed his abhorrence of the idea of injustice in God by his usual phrase, "God forbid." It cannot be so, for he proves from Exod. xxxiii. 19, that God, who always acted on the most righteous principles, declared to Moses that he would have mercy on whom he chose to have mercy, and that he would bestow his compassion on whom he saw fit to bestow his compassion, plainly proving that this objection was levelled against the positive declaration of God himself, and did impeach him with injustice in acting according to his own will in dispensing his favors to his rebellious creatures.

But to go to the true merits of the case, the principle of justice is, that every sinner deserves nothing but damnation. No sinner, as such, can lay in any claim for mercy. How, then, could God be unrighteous, in giving a sinner his just desert? And if God see fit to save one sinner, that by no means gives any other sinner a right to mercy. But, it is said, he has as good a right as the other. That is true, but neither of them has any right.

I am asked, then, why did God show mercy to this one, and not to that? I answer, "even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

16. So, then, *it is* not of him who willeth, nor of him who runneth, but of God, who showeth mercy.

This verse, in plain language, proves that the saving mercy of God is not bestowed, in consequence of the will of any man, nor in consequence of any exertions of man to gain it, but wholly and solely in consequence of the mere good pleasure of God to bestow it. This is a deadly stroke to the Arminian sentiment of non-election. They say that God gives a certain quantity of something—they call grace—to every man; and, accordingly, as any man improves, or misimproves, that grace, he will obtain mercy or not. If a man has a good will, and wishes and desires to serve God, and if he run well—that is, if he improve well the means which God has given him, God will show him mercy. But if he has no will to improve, and uses no endeavors, God will not have mercy upon him. But the Apostle is of a different opinion. His opinion is, if a man feel a good disposition in him, to choose that which is good, if he be made willing to embrace the Gospel, and to give up his heart to the service of God, it is the mercy of God freely bestowed on him that has given him this will, and if he run in the ways of religion, it is because God has been gracious to him; it is not his willing or running that has been the cause of his obtaining mercy, but it was God's mercy freely given to him, that is the cause of his willing and running.

17. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth.

The Apostle here brings in the case of Pharaoh, whose heart God had hardened, until he had brought all his plagues on the land of Egypt. This instance was to prove that God not only bestowed his mercy on whom he would, but also that he devoted whom he saw fit, to hardness and ruin. God never devoted an innocent man to destruction. This would be contrary to the principles of justice. But a guilty man is exposed to the penal demands of the broken law, and has no claim for mercy, and God may punish him in whatever way he may see fit.

But, it may be said, that Pharaoh might have repented. No doubt he had a natural power to repent, and let the children of Israel go; and he would have done so if God had seen fit to have mercy on him. But God chose to withhold his mercy, and leave him to judicial hardness and impenitence. Thus, it is certainly proved, that God dispenses his favors as he, himself, sees fit, and that he executes his vengeance on whom soever he thinks proper. All, by nature and sin, are liable to wrath, and he sees proper to save some and leave others to hardness and unbelief.

19. Thou wilt say then unto me, why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

The Apostle introduces another objection against the sovereign dispensations of God. If he grant grace to some and harden others, according to his own pleasure, independent of any qualifications, or conduct in the creature, how can a man be accounted guilty when he acts according to the circumstances in which the sovereign will of God has placed him? How could he find fault

with Pharaoh for his hardened conduct, when he, himself, hardened his heart? How can he find fault with sinners for rejecting the Gospel when he hardens them, and is determined to leave them blind and hardened in sin.

This objection looks fair, and is levelled directly against the doctrine of election. And it is truly worthy of serious observation, that Paul with great ingenuity and foresight, (for he was inspired,) in treating this doctrine, has brought in, and answered, the two leading objections that ever have been brought forward against it, from the days of the apostles unto this day, and on which have been based all the arguments, radically, that have ever induced any person to preach or write against it. The first objection is, "it is unrighteous, or unjust, for God to ordain one sinner to life, and leave another to die in his sins." (Verse 14.) Seondly, "God could not, in justice, criminate the non-elect for rejecting the Gospel." And, by-the-by, as has been observed already, (see explanations on verses 14, 15,) there can be no better proof of this very doctrine than for an inspired Apostle to vindicate it, and answer all the radical objections that can be, and ever have been, alleged against it; and for any man to renew the combat, and carry it on with the same weapons against the Apostle, which he has already silenced, is little else than to proclaim war against heaven, and, with a modest kind of blasphemy, to give the lie to the word of God.

But, let us see how Paul answers this bold objection.

20. Nay, but, Oh man, who art thou who repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him who formed *it*, why hast thou formed me thus?

21. Hath not the potter power over the clay; of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?

Μενανγε. This is a compound word, that gives the idea

of surprise, abhorrence and strong opposition. Nay, truly, Oh thou man, one of the fallen race of Adam. Who are you, pray? You, for sooth, bringing forward an objection against God, your maker! Have we not all sinned? Are we not all in a state of condemnation? Is it not right for God to do with us as he pleases? If we were not sinners God would not punish us, neither would we be objects of mercy. But now we are in the hands of our Maker, as the clay is in the hands of the potter; he may do with us as he sees fit, he can either appoint us to punishment for one sin, as we deserve, or he can have mercy on us, if he choose to do so. Our guilt will vindicate his justice on the one hand, and his mercy, through Christ, will vindicate his justice on the other. If he leave us to suffer punishment, he hath not done wrong, for we get the reward due to our iniquities; and if he see fit to have mercy on us, he hath not done wrong, for he can have mercy, through Christ, on whom he pleaseth. Thus God is just, let him do with us as he may, whether he appoint us to wrath, or to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. v. 9.)

22. *What* if God willing to show *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

23. And that he might make known the riches of his glory, on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory.

24. Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.

The Apostle has written these verses in a very laconic style, and the translators have constructed them in such a manner, that the sense is not very clear, and the sentence, long as it is, is not full, unless we supply more than the translators have done. The passage ought to read thus:

Therefore, if God, *who*, with much long suffering, has

borne with the vessels of wrath, who, *by their sin,* are fitted for destruction, choose to show his wrath and make his power known, even that he might *thereby more clearly* make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy whom he had before, *by his free grace,* prepared for glory; even *on* us, whom he hath called, not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, *what right have any to object against it!*

Although none of the elect would rejoice or feel thankful that God had passed by any of these poor unhappy fellow sinners, yet when God is pleased to do so, it should be matter of exceeding joy and gratitude that God was pleased, of his own free, unmerited goodness, to choose them, and make them the objects of his infinite and unchangeable love. And this I conceive to be the idea of the Apostle,to wit: that the elected part of mankind would, in a more peculiar manner, magnify the riches of the divine glory, from a view of God's distinguishing goodness in setting them apart to be vessels of mercy, when he saw fit to pass by thousands of mankind, and leave them in a state of irremediable ruin.

The special argument on this ground is, that when all, by nature, were fitted to destruction and every one a child of wrath as well as others, who could have any right to impeach the great Sovereign of the universe with injustice, if he choose to make his wrath known on some, and to show mercy to others? It must be evident to every impartial mind that God may dispense his favors as he please, provided he either saves or condemns none unjustly. It cannot be unjust to save a sinner through Christ, and it cannot be unjust to condemn a sinner for his guilt. Therefore, whether God saves a sinner through Christ, or damns a sinner out of Christ, he acts justly. Therefore he will forever be just, and act righteously,

while ever he does not damn a believer, or save an unbeliever; and inasmuch as he can save a sinner, through Christ, consistently with justice, and damn a sinner, out of Christ, for his guilt, he can save as many as he will and still be just, and he can leave as many as he will in a state of guilt and condemnation, and be just still. The plain truth is, God does as he pleases in the armies of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and wicked cavillers may shut up and be silent.

LECTURE XVI.

ROMANS IX. 25–33, AND X. 1–21.

25. As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, who are not my people, and her beloved, who was not beloved.

26. And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

The Apostle throughout his arguments had given no preference to the Jews; but plainly intimated that the Gentiles, under the Gospel dispensation, were equally chosen of God, with the chosen remnant of the Jewish nation. For as God, in his sovereign purpose, had distinguished between the children of Abraham and of Isaac, so also he has now called in some of the Gentile nations to be heirs of the blessings of Abraham's covenant, and had only chosen a small remnant of Israel, and was about to reject the whole nation beside, and cast them out of his presence. This bore hard against the pride of even the Jewish converts, (a number of whom were in the church at Rome.) The Apostle, therefore, saw proper to establish this interesting point by a number of pertinent quotations from the prophets. The first quoted, Hosea i. 10, and ii. 23. Where the prophet predicted that God would call, by the Gospel, those whom he had not before chosen, as he had the children of Israel, to be his people, and they should become his peculiar people, and he would be their God; and that he would bestow his special love and favor upon them who used to be accounted as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.

27. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel: Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.

28. For he will finish the work and cut *it* short in righteousnsss, because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

He then quoted Isaiah x. 22, 23, to prove that God, according to his determinate counsel, would cast off the numerous nation of Israel, excepting a small remnant, whom he would call in, to believe the Gospel. He further stated as the proper meaning of the passage, that the Lord was about closing his account with the nation, and in his righteous judgments, to make a short account, as to those whom he purposed to save, that this remainder, after the large number were deducted, which were to be consumed, (as Isaiah said) would be small, because God was determined to save but few in the land of Israel.

29. And as Isaiah said before: Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

And so small would the saved remnant be when compared with the vast numbers who were consumed, killed and taken captive at the destruction of Jerusalem, that had not the Lord left a seed, that is, had it not been for the election of grace, that reserved a few, the whole nation might have been considered as totally destroyed, like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, as the prophet had said before, in chapter i. 9.

These quotations clearly proved the grand purpose of God, both to call in the Gentiles by the Gospel and to cast off the generality of the Jewish nation, on account of their rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

30. What shall we say, then? That the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

This was a very convincing circumstance, that the heathen, who were idolators, and knew nothing of the laws, customs and institutions which God had appointed, but were totally ignorant of the true God, and Jesus the Saviour, should immediately embrace the Gospel and become interested in the righteousness of Christ, by faith in him.

31. But Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

But God's chosen people who had been favored with divine institutions, typical sacrifices, worship and ordinances, and who had all the advantages of prophecies, pointing out the Saviour to come, and calculated and designed to fix their faith on him as the Messiah; yea, these very people who had all their lives adhered to those ordinances and strictly attended to the laws of God, calculated to lead them to a crucified Saviour, rejected the Gospel, crucified their Messiah and would not submit to the righteousness of Christ. The calling of the Gentiles and the unaccountable stubbornness of the Jews, evidently show that the hand of God was in these things. But still both Jews and Gentiles had to act as moral agents, and there was a moral reason for the rejection of the Jews and the ingathering of the Gentiles.

32. Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

Although God has foreordained who will and who will not embrace the Gospel, yet the purpose of God does not infringe upon the liberty of the will; and every man who hears the word of God has a free choice, and acts voluntarily, whether he complies with or rejects the condition of the Gospel. Therefore there was a natural

reason why the Gentiles obtained and the Jews did not obtain the righteousness of Christ, which was to be obtained by faith, and no other way, to wit: the Gentiles believed on Christ, but the Jews sought to be justified by their punctual adherence to the law of Moses, their external compliance with the moral, and especially the ceremonial law. Hence it came to pass that the Gentiles were received into the church and enjoyed the blessings of the Gospel, and became incorporated with the chosen remnant of the Jews, who also believed. But the nation of Israel fell through unbelief, and were cast out of the church, and thousands of them fell as sacrifices to their own infidelity, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and thousands more were taken captives, sold as slaves, and scattered over the face of the whole earth.

32. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

33. As it is written, behold I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and a rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Jesus Christ who had been long foretold and promised as the glorious Messiah, when he came to be the Saviour of his people, became a stone of stumbling to the Jewish nation and a rock at which they were offended, or over which they stumbled and fell. But this surprising circumstance, and so fatal to the nation of Israel, was also predicted in Isaiah viii. 14 and xxviii. 16, where it is particularly stated, in bold prophetic language, "Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner, a sure foundation. He that believeth *shall not make haste, shall not be confounded,* (1 Peter ii. 6,) *shall not be ashamed.*

The Jews were offended, (or rejected Christ) because he did not appear in the high style of honor and royalty

in which they expected him to appear. They looked for a temporal prince, a temporal deliverer, and expected to be redeemed from the dominion of the Romans. But Christ was poor, made no pretentions to royal grandeur, or civil power. His kingdom was not of this world. Therefore the Jews rejected him, persecuted him and crucified him, and would not believe in him. Thus he became a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to the rebellious nation of Israel.

But although this was the unhappy case with the nation in general, yet a remnant believed on him, and the Gentiles received him, and are saved from everlasting shame and misery. And Christ, who is constituted of God, to be the only foundation of the church, the solid and unshaken rock on which his church is built, proves to this day a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, not only to the Jews, who still continue in a state of blindness and unbelief, but also to thousands of the christian world, who, like the Jews of old, are depending on the external forms of religion and never attain to the righteousness of faith. Poor, unhappy mortals, they live under the sound of the Gospel and enjoy the precious overtures of grace, but many will neglect to believe on Christ, till God, in his awful displeasure, will cut them off and sentence them to eternal ruin. Some live in profanity and wickedness, some in vanity and sensual pleasure, some trust to outward morality and others to a form of religion, but neglect the one thing needful, and consequently, for lack of faith, they stumble over that stumbling stone, and perish in their sins.

"But he who believeth on him shall never be ashamed." Oh, precious promise to the believer! Christ engages to cover him with his righteousness, so that his

sins shall never appear to confound him or put him to shame. That glorious robe which Jesus has wrought out, shall present him before God in a state of perfect innocence, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Oh, believer, look to that righteousness, rejoice in it, and glory in it, and set your hearts at rest, for Jesus engages for you, that you shall never be ashamed.

CHAP. X. 1. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2. For I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteoususness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

The Apostle appears to be well acquainted with human nature, and knowing that the application of the prophecies, which he had quoted, to the unhappy state of the Jewish nation and to the success of the Gospel among the Gentiles, would probably be construed improperly, and that it might induce the proud spirited Jews to think that he entertained a harsh or ungenerous opinion of them; he thought it proper once more (chap. ix. 1–5) to express his warm attachment to that unhappy people, and his sincere desire and prayer to God for their salvation. He could bear witness, from his former knowledge of them and from his own former experience of their views and feelings, which he himself felt when he was a persecuting Pharisee, that they, according to their views of things, had a sincere zeal, which they thought was the proper zeal for God, while they so violently opposed the Gospel and persecuted the church of Christ. But, alas, it is to be lamented that they acted contrary to knowledge, being ignorant of and inattentive to the plain meaning of their own prophecies and all the con-

vincing evidences of the Gospel, (as I myself once was, as though he should say, which consideration now makes me feel for them) they are driven on by this blinded zeal, to extravagant excesses and fatal mistakes. The Jews, altogether swallowed up in their observances of the rites of Moses, and not considering the true intent and meaning of those typical institutions, were ignorant of the righteousness of Christ which God was directing them unto, as their only justifying righteousness. And instead of submitting to the atonement made by the great Antitype, they still continued to adhere to their typical worship, to the rejection of the Messiah, their only Redeemer.

4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one who believeth.

It is evident that the Apostle alludes especially to the ceremonial law, because he here points out the radical ground of the mistake which the Jewish nation labored under, which caused them ignorantly to reject the Gospel and zealously to persecute the church. The whole ritual of Moses, and indeed the whole scope of the law and the prophets, concentered in Christ, as the only justifying righteousness of a sinner. Without Christ, the whole worship of the Jews would have been vain and perfectly unmeaning. Without Christ, all the promises to the Jews and prophecies relative to the Messiah, would have been vain and mere empty delusion. But Christ is the sum and substance, the grand scope and object of the whole. And to speak liberally, the coming of Christ, the great Antitype, the promised Messiah, was "the end of the law for righteousness," the types were finished, the prophecies were fulfilled and the whole terminated in Christ, who was constituted to

be the only righteousness of the believer. And herein lay the fatal mistake of the Jews, in not considering Jesus of Nazareth when he made his appearance, as the complete fulfillment of the law and the prophets; but still adhered to their typical worship and looked forward for the fulfillment of the prophecies, to the rejection of Christ, and consequently to the ruin of their souls.

But although the above is to be considered as the special meaning of the Apostle, yet it would not be doing justice to this important text, to confine it to the Jews, or to their ceremonial worship. The Jews had also the moral law, and there were also Gentile believers, as well as Jewish converts, and Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to all believers, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. That is, Christ, as the righteousness of the believer, comes up to the full requisitions of the law, and is what the law requires, in point of justification, and no one can arrive to that holiness of heart and life required by the law, but through Christ. Thus, the whole end and design of the law is fully answered in the believer, both in point of justification and sanctification, by Christ; his great atonement is imputed for justification, and his Spirit is given to renew and sanctify the souls, and the whole is obtained by faith; thus, in the believer, through Christ, the law is magnified and made honorable, and the poor sinner saved in a perfect consistency with the dignity of God's moral government.

5. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who doeth these things shall live by them.

In Levit. xviii. 5, Moses said that the man who doeth the commandments of the law, shall live in consequence of his obedience. We may understand this text as meaning the whole law of God, under which any person

may be placed, whether the law by covenant representation, as in Adam, or the Mosaic economy, as under the Jewish laws, or the moral law, under which all intelligent creatures are, in whatever other dispensation God may see fit to place them. God demands complete and perfect obedience to all and every one of the commands contained in his law, so that, if any one live perfectly up to the law, he will be considered as perfectly righteous, as he is supposed to have committed no sin, he must be perfectly innocent and free from guilt. This is the righteousness described by Moses which the law demands. But where, since the fall, can such a righteous man be found? No where; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Then it behoves the guilty children of Adam to look out for a Saviour through whom they may obtain a righteousness on another footing than by the deeds of the law, for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God.

6. But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, say not in thy heart, who shall ascend into heaven, (that is, to bring Christ down *from above.*)

7. Or who shall descend into the deep, (that is, to bring Christ up again from the dead.

After Paul had given his views of the righteousness to be obtained by obedience to the law, he proceeded to give us his views of the plan, on which a guilty sinner may become righteous by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He adopted the ideas expressed by Moses, (Deut. xxx. 11–14,) and applied them to the Gospel. "There is no need to inquire or surmise in your mind, saying, who shall ascend into heaven to bring the promised Messiah down to make atonement for our sins; for he has already come, and has satisfied justice by dying on the cross.

Neither is there any need to say, who shall go down into the tomb, to bring up Christ again to life from the dead, as if the merits of his death were not sufficient to satisfy the demands of the law, and that consequently he was still held a captive by the justice of God, and that our redemption was not accomplished by what Christ had suffered. For Jesus, the glorious captain of our salvation, has triumphantly risen from the dead at the appointed time, and thereby has evinced to all the universe that he had rendered full satisfaction to justice in our behalf, and is now seated at the right hand of God pleading the merits of his death in behalf of his people."

8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart—that is, the word of faith which we preach.

But instead of such disconsolate surmises, the blessed Gospel, the word of faith, the plan of salvation, as it was preached by the Apostles, is declared to be near at hand, it is now recorded in the holy Scriptures, it is preached in your ears. God has sent his Gospel to you, it is in the mouth of your ministers, who preach it to you, and you converse about, and talk of it, in an easy, familiar manner, as being well acquainted with it—yea, the plan and the condition of salvation is so plain and intelligible, that you can easily retain it in your mind, and can understand it, and perceive the propriety and suitableness of it, and feel your need of it. Yea, you are not only conversant about it, but it is addressed by the great authority of God, not only to your ears, but to your very hearts and consciences.

9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

It is evident that a mere profession of the name of

Christ, and belief that God hath raised him from the dead, let this profession and acknowledgment be ever so genuine and sincere, if the heart does not acquiesce in, and receive Christ by the cordial consent of the mind, is not saving faith. Therefore, the Apostle must mean, that a man must make this confession from a real acquiescence in Christ, and that he must in his heart, or by an act of his mind, look to Christ for salvation, under the view of the all-sufficiency of his death and sufferings, as a crucified and risen Saviour. Nothing less than this can be saving faith, and this is saving faith, and will according to the overtures of the Gospel secure to us salvation through the righteousness of Christ.

The author will, with due deference, submit the following translation to the opinion of learned divines:

Because, if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and in thy heart believe in him, thou shalt be saved, because God hath raised him from the dead.

Every one acquainted with the Greek, knows that the word ὅτι, literally, and in common use, signifies, because, although, sometimes it is used to signify, that, and we all know that God raised Jesus from the dead, because he had completed the work of redemption. Therefore, we may be sure that we shall be saved, if we will in our hearts, receive Christ, or believe in him, inasmuch as God has given us a proof of the validity of Christ's righteousness, by raising him from the dead.

10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11. For the Scripture saith, whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed.

A mere profession will not do, without the acquiesence of the heart goes along with it; and where there is a heart-felt consent to Christ, a profession of him will follow

of course. When a confession flows from the real surrender of the heart, it is an evidence of salvation, and Christ requires, as a solemn duty, although not itself as the condition of the Gospel, that his people make a profession of his name; and when there is no profession it is a bad sign, and shows that there is but little ground, if any, to believe that the heart is given up to Christ. (Matthew x. 32, 33, and xii. 30. Mark xvi. 16.) The Apostle here speaks on the same principle on which Christ said, "He who believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Not that baptism, or making a profession, is any part of the condition of the Gospel, but only a duty required by Christ, which cannot be dispensed with, with impunity, provided the believer has an opportunity of making a profession of his name. Baptism is an ordinance of God, and every believer is commanded to attend to it, according as God has appointed it to be administered. If he be an adult, and unbaptized, (which was the case with all believers when the Gospel was first preached to them,) he is under the solemn command of Christ, the head of the chruch, to confess his name, by a compliance with this order. If he has been already baptized, he is commanded to profess his name at the holy table of the Lord, and if he be a parent, he is to profess that he is a believer, by dedicating his offspring to God, acknowledging the right of his children to baptism, through his faith. As we admit that an infant claims his right to baptism through the faith of the parent, (1 Corinthians vii. 14—the opinions of the Baptists to the contrary notwithstanding,) every parent who brings forward his child to be baptized, professes himself to be a believer; otherwise his child could have no right to the ordinance.

Thus, every believer is bound, as far as he has an

opportunity, to make a confession of the name of Christ. It is true, if he does not believe in Christ by the consent, or acquiesce nce of his heart, his profession is nothing but a mere outward form, and is invalid, but if he believes with his heart, his profession is unto salvation, as it is the real confession of his heart as a true believer in Christ; and when this is the case, the believer has the testimony of God's word, (as the Apostle had observed before, in chapter ix. 33,) that he shall certainly be saved, and shall never be put to shame.

12. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all who call upon him.

13. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

In dispensing salvation to sinners, God is no respector of persons. Any man, whether he be Jew or Greek, or of what nation or people he may, if he will only call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by faith in him, and apply to him only for salvation, he shall be saved. Because God has promised in Joel ii. 32, (quoted, also, by Peter, Acts ii. 21,) "that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah," (as it is in the Hebrew,)—that is, whosoever shall acknowledge Jesus Christ, and call on him, as his only Saviour, looking to, and depending on his righteousness—"shall be saved." It must be observed that the Apostle here speaks of prayer, and of faith, or believing, as synonymous terms; not that prayer is, itself, a condition of the Gospel, but faith, which is often exercised and expressed by prayer. A man may pray, and thousands do pray, without faith, but their praying does not interest their souls in Christ. But if a man believe, he shall be saved. The thief on the cross prayed, "Lord remember me," but this was an expres-

sion of his surrender to Christ. The woman of Samaria prayed, "Sir, or Lord, give me this water." But this was an expression of the agreement of her heart to Christ's proposal to her, "Thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." The Apostle James says we must ask with faith, not with a double mind. (James i. 5–8.)

14. How, then, shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

15. As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them who preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

How, then, shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? This effectually proves that no man can pray in that manner in which the Apostle was speaking, unless he were a believer, and it is plain that *calling on the name of the Lord* means looking to, praying to, and depending on Christ only for salvation, or a prayer as an expression, and a proper exercise of faith in Christ.

How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? This text dashes at once, all those benevolent ideas, entertained by some, who are pleased to indulge their minds with fine speculative notions about the salvation of the heathen, who never hear the Gospel. Some think that the Spirit of God can secretly reveal to the minds of poor heathens the Lord Jesus Christ, and so beget faith in them, without the word of God. Others think that pious heathens, acting as well as they can, according to the light they have, will be accepted of God, and find mercy. No doubt, if man had the contriving of business, people would be saved on various plans, some one way and some another, according as private wisdom and interested criminals would dictate.

But God has his own way of saving sinners, and that is, by faith—either by personal faith in an adult, or by the faith of a federal representative, in an infant, and, the Apostle Paul being judge, no man can believe, except he hear the Gospel preached to him by some means or other.

How shall they hear without a preacher? How could a poor, dependent man ever hear the Gospel except some one would preach, or some how declare it to him? The public preaching of the word is the special means by which God makes the Gospel known to mankind, and it is generally true that the written word is confined to places where the Gospel is preached. God, it is true, has saved many of the heathen. For instance, Jethro Naaman the Syrian, Ruth the Moabitess, Job, &c. but he granted them the knowledge of himself by his word. No doubt but many have providentially heard of Jesus, among the heathen, and have been saved. But for a man to be saved by Christ, who never heard of him, is totally out of the question, and is directly and expressly contrary to the declaration of the word of God.

And how shall they preach, except they be sent? Who could venture to preach the Gospel, without divine authority? The Jews never would have preached to the Gentiles had not God sent them. But God can as easily send his Gospel to any man in the world, or send him to the Gospel, as to save a man without the Gospel, contrary to his own plan, and contrary to his own declaration in his word. It is counted a very sensible, judicious and orthodox saying that God can work by means, without means, and even contrary to means. But God has never told us so in his word, and, therefore, we have no right to believe that he ever will do so. It is enough for us to believe what God has told us, and not to be carving

out plans for him to work by; for God has his own plan, and that is, he has sent his word to sinners, and they who hear it, and believe on Christ, shall be saved, and those who hear not, cannot believe, and those who believe not shall be damned.

If, then, it is of so much importance to hear the word of God, and to come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, we may well join with the church, as she is represented by the prophet Isaiah, (Chapter lii. 7,) saying, "How beautiful are the feet of them who preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." Preachers used to travel on foot, and the church is represented as rejoicing in the very footsteps of the messengers of Christ, who came to them bearing the glad tidings of the Gospel. This is especially spoken of the Gentiles, who are represented in this animated prophecy as delighting to see the ambassadors of Christ stepping over the mountains of Jerusalem, to bear the happy tidings of salvation to the benighted regions of heathenism, that they, also, might enjoy the opportunity of hearing and believing, to the saving of their souls.

16. But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord who hath believed our report.

17. So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

But it is an astonishing truth that neither all the Jews, nor yet all the Gentiles, obeyed the Gospel, when they were privileged to hear it. Yea, it is, indeed, a notorious fact, that only a small remnant of either, believed, compared with the multitudes who have rejected the Gospel. Isaiah prophesied this of the Jews in chap. liii. 1, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" That is, who hath believed the glad tidings of the coming of the Messiah, and received him as their Saviour?

Thus, upon the whole, it is evident that faith is begotten in the heart, by the hearing of the word, and no other way; and the hearing of the word cometh by the preaching of the Gospel; and it must be evident that those who have not the opportunity to hear of Christ, cannot believe on him, and that God sends his Gospel, some way, or another, to all whom he intends to save.

18. But I say, have they not heard? Yea, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

The Apostle sets it down, as a fact, that the Gospel was commanded to be preached throughout all the world. It is true, the Gospel is not to this day preached to the whole world, but Paul spoke according to the command of Christ, and according to the purpose and intention of the church, in spreading the Gospel over the whole earth, and according to the predictions, and assurance that God had given in his word, that the Gospel shall, in due time, be preached to the ends of the earth. It is a very usual style of prophecy, to speak of things that are to be, as though they were already come to pass.

But probably the Apostle meant to show, that the Jews had all heard the sound of the Gospel. For they were to have the first offer of grace before the Gentiles were to be called. It is evident that the Apostles continued preaching to the circumcision for, at least, three years and a half, before the Gospel went out to the Gentiles; and when the Gospel was sent out to the Gentiles, it was evident, that the Jews had a sufficient opportunity given them to hear it. So that their unbelief was not occasioned by ignorance, or want of opportunity. Neither need they be offended because God gave his Gospel to the heathen, for they had the first offer, and would not embrace it.

19. But I say, did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by *them who are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation will I anger you.

Israel might, indeed, have known that God would take the Gospel from them after they had rejected it, because their prophets had often foretold, and warned them of this fatal circumstance. Moses their great prophet, in whom they trusted, had said in Deut. xxxii. 21, that God would stir up their jealousy by the Gentiles, who were accounted no people of God, who were living in ignorance and idolatry, by granting to them the blessings and privileges of his church, which stirred up the indignation of the Jewish nation, and bore hard upon the pride and arrogance even of the Jewish converts.

20. But Isaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them who sought me not—I was made manifest unto them who asked not after me.

The prophet boldly told the Jews in his prophecies, (Isaih lxv. 1, 2,) that in the days of the Gospel dispensation, God would call on the Gentiles, and receive them into the church, and although they had never sought him, yet he would be found of them; they would find an almighty and gracious Redeemer, sent to them; and that he would call them by his Spirit, and they would come at his call, and embrace the messages of his grace, and obtain a name among the children of God.

21. But of Israel he saith, all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

But he honestly foretold, that although God would have waited long, during the whole day, or time, of the ministry of Christ, and a much longer time, under the preaching of the Apostles, stretching forth his hands,

calling, inviting, pleading with, and warning them, but they would still resist the evidences, and light of the Gospel, and rush on in a rebellious, and obstinate manner, to their final destruction.

Therefore, the conclusion is fairly drawn, that as the calling of the Gentiles, and the rejection of the Jews were so clearly foretold by the prophets, the Jewish nation need not be so obstinately set against the Gentiles; nor need they pretend to excuse their own rebellious conduct, or pretend to screen themselves under a cloak of ignorance; for God had laid his whole plan before them, and they by their own wicked unbelief, and hardness of heart, had fulfilled the counsel of God against themselves, and God in righteous judgment against them, and in tender mercy towards the heathen world, had rejected them, and taken in the Gentiles in their place.

LECTURE XVII.

ROMANS XI. 1–16.

1. I say then, hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I, also, am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin.

2. God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew.

From the prophecies which Paul had quoted above, it might be thought that he intended to prove, that the whole nation of Israel was cast off, without exception. But this was not the case, for the Apostle had shown before, (chap. ix. 27, 29,) that a remnant was to be saved according to the purpose of God. Therefore, the Apostle rejects the idea of the whole being lost, and gives himself as an instance, to the contrary, who was able, clearly to trace his line of descent, through the tribe of of Benjamin, back to Abraham, the great father of the nation.

He then affirmed that God had not cast away the whole of his people, but, had reserved to himself those particular persons among them, whom he foreknew would suit his plan, to foreordain unto eternal life. That special number he had predestinated to obey the Gospel, and be formed into a christian church, as the original stock, into which the Gentiles were to be engrafted.

2. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? How he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

3. Lord, they have killed thy prophets and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life.'

The Apostle then quoted the circumstance which is stated of Elijah, the prophet, in 1 Kings xix. 14, 18, how the prophet complained to God, that Israel had wholly given themselves up to idolatry; that they had killed the true prophets, and had totally demolished their altars which were erected for the worship of the true God; and he was the only one left of God's true worshippers, and they sought his life to destroy it. Elijah thought that the whole kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel, who had revolted from the kingdom of Judah, were entirely fallen from the worship of the true God, and even totally given up to idolatry.

4. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of* Baal.

5. Even so at this present time, also, there is a remnant, according to the election of grace.

But God knew whom he had chosen, and by his grace he had preserved them from the contagion of the times. Indeed, in times of such a general declension in religion, it seems as if the very elect themselves would be deceived and drawn away by the torrent of vice and immorality, if it were possible. But not one of God's chosen ones shall perish. In the time of Elijah, God had reserved for himself seven thousand, a specific number, whom he, by his tender care, had preserved from idolatry. Even so, the Apostle stated, it was at that present time. God reserved a remnant of the Jews, wicked as the nation was, "Not according to their good works, but according to his own purpose of grace which was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began." This remnant received the Gospel, and were saved from the ruin of the devoted nation of the Jews.

6. And if by grace, then *it is* no more of works; otherwise, grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise, work is no more work.

Some say that God elects his people upon the account of good works foreseen in them; others say when a sinner repents and believes, then God elects him upon the account of his faith and repentance. How easy it is to see how both these sentiments barefacedly contradict the Apostle. He asserts that the election is of grace, and if by grace then he argues that it can not be of works: but if, for argument's sake, it be of works, then it can not be of grace, otherwise grace and works must be the same thing, or rather directly opposite to what they really are. Grace must be works, and not grace; and works must be grace, and not works.

By this, the Apostle easily shows the absurdity of supposing that election depends on works of any description, and proves that it is of the free and unmerited grace of God, independent of any thing whatsoever in the creature.

7. What, then, Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it; and the rest were blinded unto this day.

8. According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear.

The result of the argument is, that the nation of Israel has not obtained the great object of their pursuit, to wit: justification and acceptance with God, and the continuation of those peculiar and distinguishing blessings and privileges which they so eagerly wished to enjoy as God's peculiar people. But *the election*, that is God's divine, free, and unchangeable purpose, hath secured these blessings to the chosen part, or remnant, of Israel;

but the rest, even the great majority of the nation, were left in a state of blindness, ignorantly and obstinately to reject their Messiah, and thereby to bring on themselves swift destruction; and in this state of blindness they still continue unto this day, according as God hath foretold in Is. xxix. 10, and vi. 10. God not only softens the heart, opens the eyes, and unstops the ears of those who are made attentive to the Gospel, but he also hardens the heart, and blinds the eyes, and stops the ears of obstinate sinners, and he does both these things in a way which we do not understand; but the effect is, those whom God has chosen to salvation are called justified and glorified; but the rest are left to perish in their sin; they slumber away their time, and waste their opportunities; they will not attentively look at or hear the calls of God in his word, and therefore never believe in Christ.

9. And David saith, let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompense unto them.

10. Let their eyes be darkened that they may not see, and bow down their back always.

In Psalms lxix. 22, 23, to which we may add the twenty-seventh verse, David pronounced the awful doom of the incorrigible Jews. Let the plentiful provision made in the Gospel and spread before them as a feast, become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, by which, through their abuse of the blessings of the Gospel, they may fill up their cup of iniquity, and ripen themselves for more direful destruction, as a just recompense for their aggravated sins. And let them be blinded, so that they may not suspect any danger, until it comes suddenly upon them, like a heavy burden. which will make them bow down like captive slaves continually, until the time of their deliverance.

11. I say then have they stumbled, that they should fall? God forbid; but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy.

The casting off of the Jews is not to be considered as a final fall. This thought the Apostle would, by no means, admit; for although they were cast out of the church, and scattered among the nations as captives and vagabonds, yet God had not finally cast them away. But it has occurred through the dispensation of Providence, that by their present fall, and the overthrow of their city and temple, a great acquisition is gained to the Gentile world. They have not only received the Gospel, and thousands of them obtained salvation, but by the total nullification of the Jewish rites and worship, the Gentile churches are relieved from the unhappy entanglements which the Jewish converts were ever endeavoring to impose upon them, and are permitted to enjoy the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel, unfettered by legal ceremonies; and the happy benefits and blessings which the Gentiles enjoy under the Gospel will, at length, be employed as a happy means in the hands of God, to bring in the Jews to embrace the christian religion. The Gentile churches will also exert themselves, and use every expedient in their power to bring in the Jews, and to stir up in them an ardent zeal and anxiety to return to the merciful arms of their once crucified and long rejected Messiah.

12. Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness.

The fall of the Jews was the occasion of the world's being enriched with the Gospel, and the diminution of the power, influence, and opposition of the Jewish nation, in consequence of their fatal overthrow by the Romans,

was the means of enriching the Gentile church. If, then, their unhappy fall, attended with all its unhappy circumstances, was such a blessing to the Gentile world, who can conceive of the glory and happiness that will take place when the whole nation of Israel shall come, in one full and complete body, to the belief of the Gospel, and shall all be engrafted again into the church of Christ.

13. For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the Apostle of the Gentiles, I may magnify mine office.

14. If, by any means, I may provoke to emulation *them who are* my flesh, and might save some of them.

15. For if the casting away of them *be* the reconciling of the world, what *shall* the receiving *of them* be but life from the dead?

These three verses contain the finest and most affectionate address that can be found. The Apostle takes a very popular and handsome turn, both on the Jews and Gentiles at once, and with one beautiful stroke, while he dignifies his office as the Apostle, sent by the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Gentiles, he exhibits a most tender concern for the Jews, his own flesh and blood, and wishes, and endeavors, to execute his apostolic office among the Gentiles, in such a manner as to provoke, or stir up, and excite his Jewish brethren who were scattered among them, to embrace the Gospel, so that, if possible, some of them might be saved. For he is full of the glorious prospect of the happiness that will take place, when the whole Jewish nation shall be incorporated in the christian church, and the whole world, both Jews and Gentiles, shall become one solid body in the kingdom of the Messiah. For if the rejection of the Jews was so ordered, as to be a blessed reconciliation of the believing Gentiles to God, what, says the Apostle, would the receiving of them again into the church be,

but the resurrection of the whole world from a state of death, to a spiritual life in Christ Jesus? The fifteenth verse is also to be considered as a prophecy of the return of the Jews, and the general spread of the Gospel over the world in the glorious time of the millennium.

16. For if the first fruit *be* holy, the lump *is* also *holy*, and if the root *be* holy, so *are* the branches.

In this verse, the Apostle alludes to the Levitical law in Levit. xxiii. 9–21, particularly in the tenth and seventeenth verses. The Jews were commanded to bring a sheaf of their harvest and offer it to the Lord; this sheaf was to be waved on the first day, after the first Sabbath after the passover. The waving of the sheaf was a type of Christ's resurrection, as the first fruits of the harvest of the Gospel; Christ's resurrection proved the validity of his atonement as acceptable to God, and the proper ground of our justification. This waved sheaf sanctified the whole crop, and made it fit for use. (See v. 14.) They were then to number seven Sabbaths from that first Sabbath, (see v. 15 and Luke vi. 4,) which made forty-nine days, and on the morrow, or the next day after the seventh Sabbath, which was the fiftieth day after the first Sabbath, (see v. 16,) they were to bring two loaves baked with leaven, as the first fruits unto the Lord. The sheaf was the first fruits of the field, cut before the harvest was reaped or gathered; but the two leavened, and baked loaves, were the first fruits of the threshing floor, after the harvest was gathered in, and was a type of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Thus the infinite knowledge of God calculated and adjusted matters so exactly, that the passover, on which our Lord was crucified, came, in course, on Thursday evening, and Christ was

crucified on our Friday; the next day was the first Sabbath after the passover, and on the morrow, to wit, the next day after the Sabbath, the sheaf was waved, which, by a nice calculation of infinite wisdom, was on the first day of the week, and the day on which our Lord rose from the dead. From this day they counted seven Sabbaths, and on the next day after the seventh Sabbath, which was the fiftieth day, and also the first day of the week, they brought in and waved the two leaven loaves, and this was the day of Pentecost. So the sheaves, and the loaves, were always waved on the first day of the week, and fifty days apart; the sheaves, the first fruits of the harvest, and the loaves, the first fruits of the threshing floor. The sheaves represented the Gospel still in a crude, incomplete state, as it was also represented by unleavened bread. But the two loaves, leavened, raised, and well baked, which were waved on the day of Pentecost, represented the Gospel thoroughly prepared for use, and a plentiful provision for both Jews and Gentiles, each having a loaf apiece, baked in the best manner.

With an allusion to these circumstances, the first Jewish converts on the day of Pentecost, when the first christian church was erected in Jerusalem, under the Gospel dispensation, and these connected with all the converts in Jerusalem and Judea, the Apostle calls the first fruit, and the Jewish, and the Gentile churches were represented by the two leavened loaves, a plentiful provision for both.

The first fruit of the Jewish nation, was the first converts to christianity. From this the Apostle argues that the whole nation would, in due time, be brought in to believe the Gospel. A tree can be easily known to be a good, or a bad tree, by the first fruit it bears. If

the fruit be good, it proves the whole tree to be good; even although but one branch should bear, it shows the nature of the stock; some branches may be without fruit, others may be broken off, but the stalk of the tree is good, and known to be good, by the very first fruit that any of its branches have borne.

The first converts of the nation, which constituted the first christian church, were holy to the Lord; this proves that the tree is holy. It is true God has pruned off the most of the branches, and left the tree naked, all but a mere remnant; but this will, in due time, make the tree put forth much more luxuriantly than ever, and when the boughs grow out again, they will produce more exquisite fruit, and in greater abundance than ever; but all the fruit it will ever bear, will be of the same kind as the first fruit, because the tree is of the same nature.

So, also, of a field of grain—if the first batch kneaded and baked be good, it proves the whole crop to be the same, except some part be damaged by some incidental occurrence.

Again; the Apostle argues on another plan. "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Abraham was the root of the nation of Israel, and all the posterity of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, and the twelve Patriarchs, are the branches. But we are particularly to observe that the Apostle is not speaking of *personal*, but of *relative* holiness. The holiness that an individual person possesses, by santification, renewing his heart and disposing him to that which is good, is one thing, and relative holiness is another. A man may be very wicked, and yet be relatively holy. Caiaphas was sanctified, and consecrated God's high priest, and as such he was holy, relative to the levitical law, which God had instituted, by which he was, in his office, holy to the

Lord. All the utensils of the sanctuary were holy, the temple was holy, the beasts and every thing offered on the altar, were holy; so the whole nation of Israel was a holy nation, as they stood in a covenant relation to Abraham. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were their representatives in the covenant; and, so they are to this day, and for Abraham's sake, or rather for the covenant's sake, which God made with Abraham, he will, according to his promise, in due time, bless his posterity with the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom; because the blessings of the covenant made with Abraham, were entailed upon his seed. Thus the root was holy, he was constituted a covenant head of his seed; and his seed, the branches, are also holy through his covenant representation.

On these grounds, the Apostle argued that the whole nation of Israel will be, one day, brought in, to enjoy the blessed inheritance promised to Abraham and his seed, so that all the families of the earth, both Jews and Gentiles, shall be blessed in the Messiah, as God had promised to Abraham, who was constituted *the father of believers.*

Notes.—It is to be wished that the full extent of this text were duly considered. It is an incontrovertible fact, that the Apostle, in this passage, does establish this truth, that God has ordained a federal representation in the church. The whole economy of the Jewish church was founded on this very thing; the whole seed of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, were accounted holy, because Abraham believed God, and he was pleased to make a covenant with him, to be a God to him, and his seed after him. This constituted the seed of Abraham a holy seed; and, in consequence of this relative holiness, Abraham's children were to be circumcised, as a

seal to them, throughout their generations, that they were heirs with their father Abraham of the blessings of that covenant. Now here was an evident representation; the nation of Israel were federally holy through Abraham, who was a believer. But it may be asked how could Abraham's faith have any effect on his children, to do them any good. No way, verily, but by way of a covenant representation; and it not only could, but actually did, effect them in this way, for God took them under his care as his people, gave them laws, ordinances, means of grace, and his Spirit, to save thousands of them, and they all had an opportunity of salvation in consequence of it. But the matter now in hand is, not whether Abraham's children received any advantage, but did God actually establish this covenant with Abraham and his seed, and did he admit the posterity of Abraham, through Isaac and Jacob, to be heirs with him of the blessings promised in that covenant. The fact is, he did, and, therefore, all the seed of Abraham are federally holy, and belong to God by a federal relation.

The next thing to be considered, is: does this relation still exist, as to the natural seed of Abraham? It unquestionably does; because the Apostle says, the branches are holy, because the root is holy. It is true, a number of the branches are now broken off, as the Apostle argued afterwards, and we shall argue by-and-by, in its proper place. But still the nation, as such, has its covenant claim, and will be yet restored to the full enjoyment of the blessings of Abraham's covenant, as God has promised. The next question is: when the Jews will be restored and brought back, to what state will they be restored? or will they be restored to their former covenant state and relation to God? Undoubtedly

they will, as to spiritual things, (for we say nothing about their temporalities.) The Apostle says they will be grafted into their own natural olive tree, and the old root, to wit, Abraham, will bear them. Then it is plain they will be restored to all the privileges and advantages which they used formerly to enjoy. Then it must be evident that they will be restored to their former relation to Abraham, and enjoy the representation which was formerly granted to them under the old covenant. All this is plain enough.

The next question is: will their little ones be brought in with them, as they used to be, and partake of the seal of the covenant, as they used to do? Most certainly; because that was a special clause in the covenant with Abraham, and they must be admitted to full privileges, or the covenant would be broken, and they would not be grafted into the old olive. What, you say, will their children be all circumcised, as they used to be? Most certainly they must, if the same seal will continue attached to the covenant. The sign, or seal, is no part of the covenant, but only a test of the truth of it, and if God would continue the seal of circumcision, they must be circumcised; for it will be a fact that Abraham's covenant will take them in, with their parents. But if God has altered the seal, and made something else than circumcision to be the sign of the covenant, then that other seal must be administered instead of circumcision. But it is a fact, that although God has not altered the covenant, yet he has changed the sign from circumcision to baptism. Therefore, under the Gospel dispensation, every person taken into the covenant must be washed with water, in the name of the Trinity. Jesus said, (Matt. xxviii. 19:) "Go ye, therefore, disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Mark. xvi. 16:) "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved." Peter said, (Acts ii. 38:) "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus," &c. It is, therefore, a fact that the Lord Jesus Christ has changed the seal, or token of the covenant Consequently, when the Jews will be brought in, they must be admitted to all the privileges of Abraham's covenant, as they used to be, and must, every one of them, old and young, be baptized, for they are all holy, both root and branches, lump, and first fruits.

The next question is: has God established the New Testament church on the same principles of representation and federal holiness, as he did the church under the Old Testament? Most certainly he has; for the Gentiles are grafted into the old stock, and do partake of the root and fatness of the old olive tree. It is plain that the old branches—the unbelieving Jews—were broken off through unbelief, both they and their children, and the believing Gentiles were grafted in their place, and the holy root afforded to them the same juices and nourishment as it did to the old branches. Not only the stem of the scion, but all the branches that would shoot out of the stem, would be holy, and receive the same nourishment from the root as the stem would, and equally the same as the branches of all the boughs that had naturally grown out of the old stock. This is the real sense of the Apostle's arguments.

But the New Testament abundantly proves the doctrine of federal holiness, or federal representation. Acts ii. 39. "The promise," to wit: the old promise made to Abraham, "is to you, *and to your children*, and to all who are afar off, as many as God shall call;" the promise is to them and their children. This is the evident

meaning. So every believing Gentile has the same promise that the believing Jews had, even to himself, and to his children; and on the ground of this promise, Peter commanded them, *every one*, to be baptised. Here is federal representation and relative holiness. "*If the root be holy, so are the branches.*" Acts xvi. 31–33. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *thou* shalt be saved, and thy house; and *he* was baptised, and all his, straightway." Here is representation and federal, or relative holiness. 1 Cor. vii. 14. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband, else were your children unclean, but now they are holy." Here is plain and evident relative holiness, and federal representation. The term given to this text, by our Baptist brethren, is ridiculous, and evidences the miserable weakness of their cause. They say, else were your children bastards, but now are they legitimate. This is surely a dead lift to a sinking cause. The Apostle is turned into a subtle barrister, and artfully and sophistically attempts to prove that the Corinthians were lawfully married, if one of the parties was a believer, because their children were legitimate. How faith makes a marriage lawful, or how a legitimate child can prove a marriage lawful, is a mystery; neither will unbelief make a marriage unlawful, or a child a bastard. But the truth is, Paul was not pleading law; he was pleading the privileges of Abraham's covenant, and affirming that the child was federally holy, under the representation of even one of the parents, *if a believer*, and, consequently, had a right to the seal of the covenant, under the dispensation of the Gospel.

So we find it a fact that the doctrine of representation and relative, or federal holiness, is established under the

New Testament church, as well as the Old; for it is true that believers are the children of Abraham, and have their claim to the blessings of the same covenant which included their seed, as well as themselves.

But the main radical idea contained in this text, is yet to be considered. The Apostle says: "If the root be holy, so are the branches." It is evident that the covenant made with Abraham contained two clauses: one was peculiar to the Jews, as a nation: the other was common to them, and to all other nations, as individual believers. The national clause guaranteed to the nation of Israel, the land of Canaan, and the blessing and protection of God, in the dispensations of his providence towards them, as a people. And when this part of the covenant is applied to the Jews, yet to be brought in, or to Gentile believers, the land of Canaan is to be considered as a type of the church, as it really was. See Exod. xx. 12; Ps. xxv. 12–14, and xxxvii. 9, 11, 22, 29, 34; Is. lx. 21; Matt. v. 5; Rom. iv. 13; Gal. iv. 25, 26. "Jerusalem, which is above,"—the church, called Jerusalem, above—that is the *next* after the Jewish Jerusalem. Heb. xi. 10: "He looked for a city which hath foundations," to wit: the church built on Christ, the promised Messiah; and v. 14: "They seek a country," and v. 16: "They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly," to wit: an inheritance in the church of Christ, which, by faith, they saw, typically in the promised land.

But the other clause in the covenant engages the salvation of believers in and through Christ, the promised Saviour. When any person believes in Christ, he becomes, by faith, an heir of the blessings of Abraham, according to the promise. The promise is, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee; the promise is

to you and to your children." This engages salvation to the believer, and also, and equally, to his children, as well as to himself (Gen. xvii. 7; Rom iv. 11, 12, 16; Gal. iii. 7, 9, 14, 29; Acts ii. 39.) So that this covenant not only engages relative holiness, by federal representation, as it respects external privileges and outward church-membership, as Canaan was engaged to the Jews as Abraham's seed, but also the real and positive salvation of the soul. The believer shall be saved, aud his children, who die in a state of infancy, shall be saved also. "The first fruit is holy, the trunk is also holy. The root is holy, the branches are also holy." This is God's plan, and we are bound to believe it, and God will execute it, whether we believe it or not. On this plan, Christ, when he sent his seventy disciples to preach the Gospel, commanded them to preach peace to whatever house they entered (Luke x. 5, 6.) And said, "If the son of peace," to wit, the head of the family becoming a believer, "be there, your peace," that is, the blessings of the Gospel "shall rest upon it; if not," that is, if the head of the family believe not, "your peace shall return to you again," that is the blessings of the Gospel shall not be granted to that house. Not only the head of the family, but his whole family shall be affected, either the one way or the other, according as he was, or was not, a believer. "If the root be holy, so are the branches." On this same plan, Christ said to Zaccheus, (Luke xix. 9,) "This day salvation is come *to this house.*" Why? On what account? "Forasmuch as he," to wit, Zaccheus, "also is a son of Abraham. The root is holy, so are the branches." On this same plan, Christ took a little child in his arms, and called it, such as it was, a believer (Mark ix. 36, 42.) "Whosoever shall offend one of *such* little ones, *that believe in*

me," &c. Here is evidently a relative, or a federal believer, a little infant incapable of faith in itself, yet a believer, included in the covenant: "If the root be holy, so also are the branches." Christ was then in the house, in the city of Capernaum, where Peter lived, who had a family, and the greatest probability is, that he was in Peter's house, and that this was one of Peter's little children. Peter was a believer, and Christ calls his child one too, and also all such little children, who are the children of believing parents.

On this same plan, Christ took little children in his arms, and blessed them, and pronounced them members of his church, or kingdom. These were little young Jews, who were circumcised, and belonged to God, on the plan of Abraham's covenant, "If the root be holy, so are the branches." (Matt. xix. 1, 13,–15.) On the same plan, Peter said, "the promise is to you and to your children," and to whomsoever God shall call of the Gentiles, and to their children, because Peter knew, that if the root were holy, the branches would be holy also. And on this same plan, Paul not only told the Corinthians that their children were holy, if but one of the parents were a believer, and unclean if not, and baptized the household of Stephanus and Lydia, but in a very decisive manner told the jailor, (Acts xvi. 31,) saying, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house;" and when the jailor believed, he baptized him and all his straightway; for he knew that when the son of peace was there, the peace of the Gospel was to rest on the house, and that if the root be holy, so are the branches. This is evidently the divine plan of that gracious covenant which God made with Abraham, and which the apostles affirm to be the basis of the church. Thus Christ acted, and

thus Peter acted, and thus Paul acted, all on these radical covenant principles. "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Thus we see that the plan of God with Abraham; the plan of Christ when he was on earth, who came as a divine teacher, to make known the will of his Father, and the plan of the apostles, whom he inspired, and sent out to preach the Gospel, was that children should be represented by their parents. The doctrine of relative holiness and federal representation is clearly exhibited from one end of the Bible to the other. But our Baptist brethren have no covenant, no representation, no relative holiness, no federal rights, no holy branches, no children in their church; they baptize no households, they never say, peace be to this house, and if they find the son of peace, they will not give their peace to the house; salvation never comes to their houses because their believers are the children of Abraham; they have no seal for the seed of a believer; they never tell a man to believe, and he and his house shall be saved; they never baptize him and all his straightway; their unbelieving wives are never sanctified by the husband, nor the husband by the wife; they have no holy children, but all their children are unclean; they have no Lydias, no jailors, no Stephanuses, in their church, and their children are all heathenish unbelievers. How unlike the church of Christ, founded on the gracious covenant which God made with Abraham, evidently including believers and their families, "In thee, shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

But there are many who admit infants to be members of the church, who object to the idea of their being saved by the faith of their parents. They ask, how can the faith of one, save another? I ask, how did Abraham's faith give Isaac a right to be circumcised? No way

under heaven, but only by God who was pleased to grant him a right with his father, on the condition of his father's faith. I ask again, how does a believer's faith save himself? No other way than as a condition on which God is pleased to grant him salvation. I ask again, could not God. if he saw fit, extend his grant of salvation to his children? surely. It is not the merit of faith that saves a sinner; but purely because faith is the condition on which God is graciously pleased to grant salvation freely. If faith were a meritorious thing, it could only save us as far as its merit would extend; but as it is only a mere condition, it can do nothing without a promise annexed to it; but, with a promise, it can and must extend as far as the promise extends, and neither more nor less can be saved by it, because it is God who saves, and not the condition; and a God of truth must save all that he has included in his promise, and faith has nothing to do but simply to consent for him to do it; and as soon as this consent is given—as it is the condition proposed—God's truth binds him (to speak with reverence) to grant salvation to all who are included in the promise. To make this matter plain, let us suppose that God engages that he will save A, if he will believe, or give his consent to the proposal. A consents, and claims the promise; but on this proposal, God can save none but A, because he only has a claim to the promise. Now it is objected and said, how can one man believe for another? I answer, he can, and must, if he believes at all, if any other person is stated in the proposal. Let us suppose that God proposes to A, that if he will believe, he will save him and his *whole house.* We will suppose that he has two children, B and C; well, A believes, and is saved; but God in saving A has only done the one-third of what he has promised; and if B and C

should die while they are represented by A, according to the argument, God must save them, because he said he would: and B and C have an equal claim for salvation as their father, and must not, and shall not be denied; for "If the root be holy, so are the branches." Afterwards, A has another child, D; this child is born with a claim to the promise of God, because God had said to A, believe and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. Now, if A would have any given number of children, E, F, G, and even all the letters of the alphabet, the promise would include them all; and every one would have an equal claim, and God would remember his covenant with little Z as well and as faithfully as he would to old father A; and he shall be saved, and not one child he has, if it die in a state of minority, shall in any wise be lost.

Now, this is as plain as the letters in the alphabet; and one question more will decide and establish the whole business, and this question is—does God propose, and does God really engage, in his word, to save the believer and his house? I answer, *he does*. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." "If the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. The promise is to you and to your children. I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." It is, indeed, strange that when the word of God is so plain on this subject, that people have so many opinions about infants. Some think that all infants, dying in a state of infancy, will be saved. But this notion is totally unfounded, and has no support in the word of God. God never has given the least idea in Scripture that he will save any of the race of Adam but believers; those who are not believers, either personally or federally, must be

damned; God has said so, and it must be so; let any man think as he may, God will do as he has said.

The most common opinion of Calvinists is, that the children of believers are in covenant with God, so far as to entitle them to the outward privileges of the church, a religious education, the use of the means of grace, the pious prayers of their parents, and of the church, &c. and that the infants of unbelievers are committed to the uncovenanted mercy of God. But all this is saying nothing. For my part, I know not what uncovenanted mercy means, and at any rate the Bible does not tell us that God ever saves any person whatever by uncovenanted mercy. If a man is in God's covenant when he dies, he will be saved; but if any one should die out of God's covenant, I cannot see in, the Bible, any chance for his salvation. God has never promised a single saving blessing to an unbeliever, or his children, and there is no grounds to hope for what God has never promised to grant. According to the Scriptures, a believer has everything to hope, and nothing to fear; but an unbeliever has nothing to hope, and everything to fear.

But why should we curtail the blessings which God has promised to our children? Why restrict our little ones to the outward privileges of God's house, and deny them the spiritual blessings of salvation, when God himself, in his word, has said they shall be saved? Can we have boldness enough to rob them of the real benefits of our faith, and put them off with external things in defiance of the declaration of God's own word. What have we to do in the business, and what can we do, when God has told us, and promised them, that he will save them? Remember, the argument is not about the advantages of children who live to grow up to years, but of those who die in a state of infancy. Let the question be for the

sake of argument, what is promised to the children of believers who die on their mothers' breasts? This is the time to try the validity of God's covenant, and the faith of a believing parent. While our children are well and healthy, and growing up to maturity, all things seem to do well. But let us fix our eyes on a dying infant, about to leave the world, parents, teachers, church, and all the privileges of the Gospel, and what is now to be said and done? And what has God promised to do for the immortal soul? Shall we say that the poor, little thing is innocent, has no sin, and will go to heaven? Alas, alas! If the root had been holy, (Adam,) the branch would have been holy also; but the root is unholy, fallen and guilty, and so are the branches. But, Oh parent, are you a believer? If so, you have your claim to salvation, according to the promise of the covenant. But God says, in that covenant, that he will be a God to your seed as well as to you; that he will save your house, as well as you; that the promise is both to you, and to your children. Now, parent, bring forward your outward privileges; your sucking child is dying; what will God do for it? It is baptized; well, it is a member of the visible church; well, that might have done it some good, had it lived, but now it is dying, and leaving the church, and what good does it receive, or has it ever received, from its visible church-membership? You have taken it to church; well, what good did it get there? None at all. Have you taught it to read, say questions, to say its prayers? Have you taught it to know that there is a God, a Saviour, that it is a sinner, that it needs pardon, that it must believe on Christ, that it must be sanctified, and made holy? No, it is too young, it cannot speak, nor understand, and is not capable of instruction. Had God spared its life, such instructions might have done

good; but your child is dying, what have you done for it? Nothing but clothed it, suckled it, nursed it, and taken care of it. Well, has not the child of a Hottentot, or a Choctaw Indian, enjoyed equal advantages with your child? But what has God done for your child? No more than he has done for any other child of the same age, and not as much as for many, for he is continuing thousands of unbelievers' children in life and health; but your child is sick and dying. Well, what has God promised to do for it when it is dead? Yes, my friend, that is the question in which you and your child are both deeply concerned; and what has he promised? Nothing but outward privileges, parental instruction, and so on, and so on? Nay, he has never promised that to this child, or if he has, he does not intend to fulfill his promise, for your child is dying, and will never enjoy any such privileges. The truth is, if God will not save its soul, that blessed covenant which was sealed to this dying child in baptism, is a perfect blank; a mere song, and a delusion; God (to speak with reverence, and with abhorrence of the thought,) has been sporting with you all this time; telling what great things he would do for you and your house, for you and your seed, for you and your children; and now when your child dies, he will not save its soul, but send it to hell! And pray does not the child of a Hottentot, or a Choctaw Indian, without any covenant relation, fare equally with your child, both in time and eternity? Is this God's covenant with Abraham, and with believers and their seed? Is this the way that salvation is come to a believer's house? Is this the way that the peace of Christ rests upon a house? Is this the way that a house is saved? Is this the way that God is a God to the seed of a believer? Is this the blessing promised to a be-

liever and to his children? What! nothing but outward privileges to a dying child? God forbid!

But God has never said so. No, blessed be his name. He has faithfully promised, and covenanted, and sealed the salvation of this dying child; and he will never forget his covenant, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail; and this child, being the seed of a believer, will as assuredly go to heaven as its parents will; for the promise is equally given to both, and God will be as faithful to the one as to the other. This is not mere opinion, or whimsical notion. It is the word of God, the unchangeable truth of the *eternal Jehovah*, for "if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

LECTURE XVIII.

ROMANS XI. 17–36.

17. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree,

18. Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

The Apostle here gives the idea that the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation were cut off from the stock of Abraham, and the Gentiles, who were considered as belonging to the wild olive tree, were grafted into the Jewish stock among the Jewish converts. The Jewish converts were the happy remnants of the nation, and were first constituted into a christian church in Jerusalem, on the day of Pentecost. These were the natural branches of the old tame, or cultivated olive, which remained on the natural stock, and by them the christian church was founded, on the basis of Abraham's covenant, and the same members who founded the old Jewish church now founded the christian church, and by a happy change in ceremonials, the church transmigrated from the Mosaic to the christian dispensation, yet standing on the same radical foundation as before. The first members of the christian church were members of the Jewish church, acknowledged and sealed by circumcision, and they became members of the christian church by faith in Christ, acknowledged and sealed by christian

baptism. But the others, who believed not, were not thus acknowledged, and, although they were circumcised, yet they were cut off and cast out of the church, which plainly shows that circumcision was done away, for it did them no good; whereas, those who were baptised, were still acknowledged by God as members of his church. All which plainly shows that baptism was instituted in the room of circumcision.

The first christian church, being formed of Jewish members, on the basis of Abraham's covenant, plainly shows that the church is the same church, only differing as to mere external ceremonies. Christ was the foundation of the Jewish church, only he was yet to come, and was represented by types and prophecies, and Christ is the foundation of the christian church, only he has already come, and died and is risen again.

When a Gentile becomes proselyted to the Jewish religion, he, after suitable washings, &c. was received and recognized a member—both he and his whole family, by circumcision. When a Jew who was a member of the Jewish church, and recognized as such, refused to believe in Christ, he was cast out of the church; that is, he was not recognized as a member of the church of Christ, and his circumcision could not save him. This, the Apostle calls, a branch of the church, broken off; that is, cut off from the old, original stock of Abraham. When a Gentile believed in Christ, and professed his faith, he was received into the church, and recognized a member, by baptism. This, the Apostle calls a branch of the wild olive, grafted in the good olive. Therefore the Apostle exhorts the Gentiles not to carry themselves haughtily against the Jews, but to remember that the Jewish church was the root from which they derived all their support; and let who will be broken off, or who will be

grafted on, the old root is the same, and changes not. It supported the Jewish church while it continued, and now it supports the christian church, not only its own natural branches who remain on it, but also all the Gentiles who are grafted in among them, and supplies the whole with spiritual nourishment. The Apostle here used the excellent figure of grafting, but not in all its circumstances. The ingrafted scion never changes its nature, but it always receives its nourishment from the stock in which it is grafted. This last circumstance is what is alluded to in the figure. The Gentiles were engrafted into Abraham's covenant, that they might be supported according to God's original plan, from the root of the olive tree.

19. Thou wilt say, then, the branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.

20. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith, be not high-minded, but fear.

21. For if God spared not the natural branches, *take heed* lest he also spare not thee.

If a Gentile were disposed to boast, he might, indeed, consistently with truth, say that the old branches were broken off, but whether God's design was simply to make room for them, would be another question. It was, however, a truth, that the Gentiles were engrafted into Abraham's covenant, or adopted into the church, as Abraham's seed, in the room of the unbelieving Jews. But still this was no argument for boasting, because it was no moral excellence in them that induced God to take them into the covenant with his chosen people, but his own good will, that called them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to leave the others to blindness and unbelief. Unbelief, says the Apostle, was the judicial cause of their being broken off, and faith was the

conditional cause of your engraftment, and, therefore, it will be by faith that you will stand fast in God's covenant, if you do stand. It is your duty, consequently, to be humble, and watch carefully over your own conduct; lest, in process of time, you, as a church, fall after the same example of unbelief. For, it is plain that if God would proceed with such judicial severity against the natural branches of his own olive, the wild branches had need to take heed that they stand fast in the faith, for they may be well assured that God will not spare them, if they, as a church, do not continue faithful to his covenant.

22. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them who fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

23. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graffed in; for God is able to graff them in again.

This is truly a solemn warning to all the churches, and especially to the church of Rome, to whom this epistle was sent. They are honestly called to consider both the goodness and severity of God. God was severe; that is, not cruel, but strict in the execution of his justice against the infidel Jews, but good, indeed, to the Gentiles, and would continue his great goodness to them, if they would continue to stand fast in the faith, as a people, and not depart from the simple doctrines of the Gospel. But the Apostle, no doubt as a prophet of God, solemnly, as well as prophetically, warned the Roman church that if they would not continue in the faith of the Gospel, and humbly walk according to the doctrines of Christ, but would be proud, arrogant, superstitious, lording it over God's heritage, assuming the reins of government, domineering over the churches, as has been, and is yet, the peculiar characteristic of the lordly bishop of

Rome, God would also cut them off, and cast them out of his covenant, as he had done the rebellious Jews; and they should be cut off effectually, not having even a promise left them, as the unbelieving Jews still have, of a gracious return. This was a peculiar circumstance, that the Apostle should be directed to write in such a peculiar style to the church of Rome, who is now, in the fulfillment of these awful predictions, become "The man of sin, the mother of harlots, and of the abominations of the earth," and will soon go into perdition.

And as to the Jews who are broken off, there is a possibility for them to be engrafted again into their original stock, and they shall be engrafted, when they shall cease to remain in their unhappy state of unbelief, for when they become believers, God can, upon the general call of the Gospel, as well as consistent with his promise to Abraham, receive them as returning prodigals into his house, and grant unto them all their former privileges and blessings, which they can claim as the children of Abraham, so soon as they believe in Christ. This is undoubtedly to be considered as a prophecy of the restoration of the Jews into the bosom of the church, and it is to be noticed that this prophecy will not be fulfilled, until God shall have poured out his wrath to the uttermost in the total destruction of the church of Rome, that proud, haughty, rebellious mistress of the earth, to wit.: of the church of God.

24. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and wert graffed, contrary to nature, into a good olive tree, how much more shall these, who are the natural *branches*, be graffed into their own olive tree?

This was an humbling stroke. The Gentile church is represented as a scion taken off a tree, by nature wild, and set in a tame, or cultivated stock, that, it being taken

out of the thick forest, and placed under the care and cultivation of the good husbandman, it might enjoy all the benefit of good soil, manure and cultivation. But the natural branches which grew out of the original stock, although at present cut off—not destroyed, but deposited in a proper place until the proper time for engrafting—would, when grafted in again, easily vegetate on their own natural stock and soil, as restored to their former place and natural climate, and supplied by the natural juices of their original root. Oh, how humble we, Gentiles, ought to be. The Jews have received no advantage from us, but we have been totally dependent on them, and from them have received all our nourishment. The Baptist church ought to take care, for they acknowledge no dependence on Abraham's covenant, they deny that the root bears them, they profess originality, and like the Samaritans of old, will have no dealings with and ask no favors of the Jews. No doubt the old, venerable Apostle, with his inspired pen in his hand, would say, "Take heed, lest he spare not thee, be not high-minded but fear; but, if thou wilt boast, remember, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.

25. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness, in part, is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.

The Gentile churches ought to know, and not only know, but also consider, that God has left a considerable part of his chosen nation to blindness and unbelief, to fulfill his own purposes concerning the church. This is a mysterious thing, indeed, and we do not pretend to know the reasons of such extraordinary dispensations towards the nation of Israel. But we ought to consider that God has done this wonderful thing to his own chosen

people because of their unbelief. Why he chose to give them up to this awful blindness is known to himself. But the Gentiles ought to remember that they are also in the hand of God, and that they enjoy all their blessed privileges by a free and unmerited gift from him, who was pleased to choose them to salvation, while he saw fit to reject the Jews whom he once favored, and this consideration ought to keep them humble. And how awful is the reflection that the bishops of Rome rejected the wise counsel of the Apostle, who gave them timous warning by this epistle from God, and thus they "became wise in their own foolish notions, so that by their pride and ambition they have become an object of pity and contempt, remarkably signalized as a church deserted of God, and bereft of everything good.

But God has ordained that this judicial blindness of the Jews shall only continue for an appointed season, even until the glorious time appointed in the infinite counsel of God, when the Gospel shall be spread over all the world, when all the nations of the earth shall come into the church, and Jews and Gentiles partake together of the blessings of the Gospel.

26. As it is written, there shalt come out of Zion, the deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.

27. For this *is* my covenant with them when I shall take away their sins.

The Apostle then quoted Isaiah lix. 20, 21, the substance of which he explained to signify that Jesus Christ would come in his spiritual kingdom as a great deliverer, who would appear, as out of Zion, his church, in behalf of his Gospel, and he would not only gather to himself all the Gentile nations, but, also, by his divine word, would reclaim the unbelieving Jews, take away their blindness, infidelity and obstinacy, and, as it were,

renew his covenant with them, and reinstate them in the blessed privileges of his church. Then shall all the great and glorious things promised to Zion be fulfilled, and Christ shall reign in his spiritual kingdom over the whole earth, and shall see the glorious effects of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

28. As concerning the Gospel, *they are* enemies for your sake, but as touching the election, *they are* beloved for the father's sake.

With regard to the Gospel, considering them as rejectors of it, and opposed to its progress among the Gentiles, God viewed the Jews as enemies to him and his cause, and treated them as such, therefore he cut them off, and cast them out of his way, for the church's sake, and out of the way of the Gospel. But with regard to them as his chosen nation, and with regard to the numerous offspring which was yet, after many generations, to spring from their loins, whom he had chosen from eternity, and given to his dear Son to adorn the triumphs of the Gospel at the time of the latter-day glory, they were beloved; that is, God took care of them, even in their state of captivity, and, although he cast them out of the way of his church, yet he preserved their lives, prolonged their race, and kept them as a people distinguished from all the world, for the sake of the covenant that he made, and the oath that he swore to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Thus, whatever things may occur, and whatever judgments may be inflicted, even on God's covenanted people, yet the council of God must stand fast, and his elect must be saved.

29. For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

Whatever blessings God engages in covenant to bestow he will bestow them, and whatever he overtures in the calls of the Gospel he will make good, and whatever

appointments, κλησις, ordinations he makes, or whatever things he ordains to come to pass, shall be, accordingly, as his divine will has determined. There is no change of mind with God, he never repents, or retracts, in all his plans and purposes, but will dispense his providence in such a way, and will always so superintend all the affairs of his church, and of the world, as eventually to bring his purposes to pass, and fulfill what he has said. However dark and unpromising, and contrary to human view and expectation the dispensation of God may appear to us, God knows his plan, and will make everything work together to fulfill his decrees, without the least deviation. "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning."

30. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy, through their unbelief,

31. Even so have these, also, now not believed, that through your mercy, they also may obtain mercy.

32. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Although the blindness of the unbelieving Jews was according to God's eternal plan and purpose, yet it was so overruled by a divine Providence, that it became an occasion of the spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles. God will not keep his ministers preaching for nothing—but when they are done with what work he has for them to do in one place, he will remove them to another. And he can make a thousand occasions for the removal of his ministers; even disputes, dissentions, and persecutions, often serve for this purpose. Paul and Barnabas must differ about John Mark, and the result was, Paul and Silas went through Asia into Europe, and Barnabas and Mark went to the island of Cyprus. The persecutions, when Stephen suffered martyrdom, occa-

sioned a great spread of the Gospel over all Judea and Samaria: and when the Jews had the Gospel preached to them for more than three years, the remnant were mostly brought in, and the opposite party were so hardened, and filled with such a persecuting spirit, that the most of the Apostles were obliged to leave Judea, and go out among the Gentiles, except James, and sometimes Peter, and a few other teachers, who remained to feed the churches in Judea. Paul earnestly plead with God to let him stay in Jerusalem, but he would not admit it, "because," said he, "they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." (Acts xvii. 17–21.) Thus, through the unbelief of the Jews the Gospel was more abundantly preached to the poor, benighted Gentiles, who had long remained in a state of idolatry, ignorant of God, and the doctrines of true religion; yet they obtained that mercy which the Jews rejected.

So, also, the unbelieving Jews are left in a state of disobedience to the Gospel, who will, in process of time, afford a glorious opportunity to the Gentile churches to exert themselves in being instrumental in extending the overtures of mercy, which they have received through the infidelity of the Jews, to that forlorn nation; so that they, also, in the fulness of time, may receive mercy and forgiveness through their crucified Redeemer.

Thus God dispenses his mercy in such a surprising manner, that he manifests to the world that the salvation he grants to sinners, of every description, is granted to unworthy rebels, who evidently deserved his wrath and vengeance.

He first had his elect among the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob. He consequently chose out the nation of Israel, and confined the means of grace peculiarly to them; knowing that his word would be

useless where he had no elect to save. He, therefore, did not choose unnecessarily to aggravate their condemnation by giving them his word, but left them to the blindness of their own hearts, that their condemnation might be the more tolerable. But the nation of Israel were taken out of the wild and uncultivated mass of idolators, that it might appear that God was pleased, of his own goodness, to have mercy upon them.

When Christ came, and the Gospel dispensation was introduced, God had a few of his elect among the Jews, (a comparatively small remnant,) but the great body of them was among the Gentiles. He, therefore, called in his remnant first who seemed like brands plucked from the burning; then he gave his Gospel to the Gentiles, and took them in, who were, indeed, a miserable set of abominable idolators, and truly unworthy of the notice of the Deity; yet he was pleased to have mercy upon them, and granted them his word and ordinances. But the body of the Jewish nation were cast out of the church, and were left destitute of the Gospel, because God had none of his elect among them.

Note.—Paul says, (verse 7th,) "Israel hath not obtained—but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Dr. Scott judiciously observes, that "this is an election within an election." The Arminians say, that God elects nations, as he did the nation of Israel for his own people, &c. But what does Paul mean by this election within an election? We grant that God elected the nation of Israel to be his peculiar people; but for what purpose did he elect a small remnant within the elected nation, and leave the rest in a state of blindness? The evident purpose was, that these persons, so elected, should believe the Gospel, while the rest rjeceted it. Dr. Scott thinks this un-

answerable in favor of personal election, and I think so too.

Lest the proud Pharisees should think that God was indebted to them for their long standing as his peculiar people, who were the descendants of faithful Abraham, and the repositories of the oracles of God, and a holy nation, God saw fit to reject them, and cast them out of his church, and not only so, but gave them up to blindness, hardness and infidelity, to imbue their hands, not only in the blood of the martyrs, but even in the blood of the dear Son of God, and to stand, now nearly eighteen hundred years, in the most bitter and violent opposition to the cause of Christ, so that when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come, these poor, miserable outcasts, who had been, not only rejected of God, but despised by men, will indeed be objects of pity, and they being sensible of their own guilt and wretchedness, will deeply feel themselves objects of mercy, when they lay down their national pride, and humbly submit to receive pardon from the hands of him whom they had crucified on Mount Calvary. Thus God, in his wonderful dispensations, suffers sinners to sink into the depth of unbelief and wretchedness, that he may give a more glorious display of his boundless mercy and compassion.

33. Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.

Oh, what an unfathomable deep is the infinite treasure of wisdom and knowledge, which God has manifested in the plan of redemption. And what divine skill, and most perfect knowledge of all things, are exhibited in the various dispensations of his grace and mercy! "How unsearchable are his judgments—that is, how

impossible it is for finite minds to know, or find out, the special reasons and causes why God determines, or the grounds on which he judges, when he chooses one, and rejects another—making some, at one time, the objects of his care, and subjecting others to the rigor of his justice. At other times, taking those under his care, whom he had formerly rejected, and leaving those who were formerly the objects of his regard, to feel the strokes of his displeasure. Neither Jew nor Gentile can see into the cause of these different dispensations, nor pretend to understand the ways of the infinitely just and holy God, whose ways are in the deep waters, and none can comprehend them.

34. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?

Finite creatures ought to be contented with what God is pleased to reveal to them of his divine will, plans, and purposes, and not arrogantly object, because they cannot understand the propriety of his counsel. Some, in a manner bordering hard upon profanity, dictates, as it were, to the Deity himself, as if they "were his counsellers," and presume to affirm what God will do, as if they "knew the mind of the Lord, without a single text in the Bible to tell them so; yea, directly contrary to the positive declaration of God himself in his word. But God will do as he pleases, and proud mortals may object, as though their knowledge and wisdom were fit to be a rule for the conduct of their Creator. But he is accountable to none, nor does he ask Gabriel what to do.

35. Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again.

God does not deal with mankind as they, by way of traffic, deal with one another; as one man sells, or

barters, any piece of property to another, and he in return repays him for it. No man can, on the first principles of merit, claim any thing of God, or payment for any thing he ever did, or could do for him, for God is an independent being, he needs nothing from us, and we can give him nothing, for all we are, and all we have that is either naturally or morally good, we have received graciously from him, so that we are indebted to him for all we possess, but he owes us nothing.

36. For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things. To whom be glory forever. Amen.

God is the great creator of all things, therefore all things are of him; he preserves all things, therefore all things are continued in existence through his agency and providence, and to his glory all things shall finally and ultimutely be subservient, and let us who are his intelligent creatures, ever feel it to be our duty and our highest honor to give glory to his blessed name forever, Amen, so let it be.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS.

A great part of the Scriptures are misunderstood and misconstrued by not attending to what subject any particular text or passage is speaking of. The Arminians quote a great many passages of Scripture to establish their uncomfortable doctrine of falling from grace. The passage which has been the subject of this lecture, particularly from the seventeenth verse to the twenty-second, is relied on as a special proof that a believer may fall finally from a state of grace, and be lost.

To speak accurately and scripturally on this subject, we must observe that an individual person is said to be

in a state of grace, when he is interested in Christ, by faith. A nation, a city, a family, or a church, is said to be in a gracious state, when they enjoy any gracious privileges from God—are taken into his special care, and blessed with the privileges of the Gospel. A number of such a nation, city, church or family, may, indeed, be truly religious and personally interested in the righteousness of Christ, but this is only a personal thing, as it relates to individuals.

Now we do not deny, nay, we hold and can easily prove, that a nation, a city, a church, or a family, may fall from grace, that is, fall from the enjoyment of the protection of God and the privileges of the Gospel, into a state of sin and rebellion, and may be deserted and chastised, and punished by God for their sin. But we deny that a personal believer, although he may for a time backslide and fall into sin, will finally fall away, and be lost; neither does this passage prove any such thing. It is evident that the Apostle is not speaking of personal believers, but of the Gentile church, and particularly of the Roman church and the nation of Israel. It is true Paul used the pronoun *I* and *you* in the singular number, as though he were addressing an individual; but this is a very common thing, both in the Scriptures and in common language. Jesus said, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou who killest the prophets," and "Woe unto *thee* Bethsaida, woe unto *thee* Chorasin, and *thou*, Capernaum," &c. and a thousand such instances might easily be quoted, plainly showing that words used in the singular are often employed to signify bodies of people. Israel was the branch broken off, and the Gentile church was the scion grafted into the Jewish stock. Then it is plain that this passage says nothing about individual believers falling from a state of

grace; but only proves that the Jews, as a nation, did fall, and that the Gentile church, or any individual church among them, would fall if they did not continue steadfast in the Gospel.

But, again, we are to enquire how a church or family may fall from the favor of God. There are two ways for churches to fall; one is by their members being, at least too many of them, mere outward, nominal professors, and not real christians. When this is the case, when those professors, not having the genuine grace of God in their hearts, fall off from their profession, apostatise and forsake the cause of the Gospel, then the church falls; the members become either mere formalists, or wicked sinners, and are deserted of God and devoted to destruction. But it very often comes to pass that churches fall by the children of religious parents growing up to maturity and rejecting the Gospel. Thus the church, which once flourished in piety and a firm attachment to the Gospel, may become vain, sensual and wicked, when her young members grow up in unbelief and inattention to the duties of religion. This very important circumstance, which often takes place in families where the parents are religious, deserves our serious attention.

The greatest difficulty in the doctrine of the salvation of infants by the faith of their parents, arises from this very circumstance. The children of believers, while young, are in covenant with God, and consequently their salvation is engaged to them by covenant promise, if they die in a state of nonage, while they continue under the representation of their believing parents. But if they live and grow up to years of discretion, capable of acting for themselves, they being moral agents and addressed personally by the Gospel, are called to give

their own consent and believe for themselves; they consequently lose or naturally come from under the representation of their parents and have to answer the call of the Gospel in their own persons, and become responsible for their own conduct; and if they would, on the offer of Christ addressed to them personally, believe in Christ, they would then be saved by their own personal faith. But if they reject the Gospel and refuse to give their consent to the Lord Jesus Christ, they fall from God's covenant, and having lost the representation of their parents, they become unbelievers and are, by their own unbelief, liable to condemnation. This looks like falling from grace, and indeed so it is, but it is not a personal believer falling. This is the way in which families unhappily fall from grace, their children grow up and are unbelievers, and when the generality of the families in a church thus fall away, the church to which they belong, falls off from religion and becomes formal and hypocritical, and the church having lost its old religious members, is filled with careless, irreligious professors, and thus she gradually dwindles to nothing and is cut off as a branch from the stock, and the church withers away,

Now if the Scriptures give us this account, we ought to believe it and not suffer our fancies to carry us away with whimsical notions of our own. Let us, then, honestly enquire what the word of God has said on this subject.

First, is it a fact, that the promises of the covenant do really apply to the child of a believer, as well as to himself? If so, then, it is plain, that children are represented by their parents. Gen. xvii. 7. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." Here Abraham's seed are evidently embraced in the covenant.

But, it may be said, that this promise was designed to distinguish the nation of Israel, as a nation, from the other nations of the earth. But admitting this to be one design of the covenant, yet it was not the only one, because, it is evident that the Apostle Peter applied this same covenant to believing Gentiles, as well as to believing Jews. Acts ii. 39. "For the promise is to you (Jews) and to your children." Remember that at this time God had no design to keep the Jews a separate people any longer, but intended to apply the same promise to them, which had been given in the covenant with Abraham, under the Gospel dispensation, when the Gentiles were, also, to be incorporated among them, as believers. The Apostle, also, applied this same promise to whomsoever of the Gentiles, the Lord should effectually call to believe in Jesus Christ, including their children, also, with them. The angel said to Cornelius, (Acts xi. 14,) that Peter would tell him words whereby he, *and all his house,* should be saved. Paul said to the jailor, (Acts xvi. 31,) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and *thy house,*" He, also, told the Corinthians, that, if even one of the parents were a believer, the children were holy, otherwise they were unclean. Now, it must be plain from these, and such Scriptures, that the children of believers are included in the covenant, with their believing parents, and that the promise of the covenant is made to the child as well as to the parent.

But, perhaps, it may be thought, that this promise only respects those of the seed, or children of believers, who, when they should grow up, would believe in Christ. I believe this is not an uncommon opinion; but, it is certainly incorrect; because, the child of an infidel, or a heathen, would have the same benefit, who had no

promise at all, as a believer's child would have, who had the promise of God certified and sealed, so that this special promise to a believer would be perfectly void and of no manner of effect, if this were true.

Not only so, but God has applied the seal of this covenant to little infants. It must certainly be a truth, that circumcision was a seal of the covenant which God made with Abraham, and his seed. And, it must be a fact, that the seal of a covenant could never be applied to a person who had no interest in it. But God ordered Abraham to circumcise his whole family. This seal was, therefore, by the order of God put on Ishmael, when he was thirteen years of age, and on Isaac when he was but eight days old. The command was to circumcise all the Jewish children at eight day's old, because they were born in covenant with God, and had their covenant claims to the seal whenever it could with convenience be placed upon them. So, also, the Apostles were ordered to baptize all nations, to disciple them, to bring them into a church state, organized under the covenant made with Abraham. Therefore, the Apostles, in pursuance of this command, spoke peace, and proclaimed salvation to the whole house of a believer, and baptized, not only the believer, himself; but, also, his household. From all these positive statements in Scripture, we are surely authorized to say, that the children of believers are included in the promises of the covenant, and, are consequently, represented by their parents, and, if they die in an infantile state, they will die with a covenant claim to the promise of God, that he will be their God, and that he will save their souls, according to the word that he had spoken. Surely, if God be true to his word, and faithful to his promise, no dying infant of a believer can ever be lost, for

it is an unquestionable fact, that God has graciously promised to be its God, and to save it as a part of the household of its believing parent. And, it is particularly to be remembered, that this promise especially relates to those children of believer's, who die in a state of infancy, before they are capable of acting for themselves. God guarantees their safety, if they die, and allows the parent, or parents, to act for them, while the little ones are incapable of acting personally for themselves. We feel perfectly satisfied that the texts quoted above, do sufficiently prove this matter, to the satisfaction of any person, who wishes honestly to depend on the simple declaration of God in his word.

The next thing to be considered is, what will be the state of those children when they have grown to a state of maturity? It appears from the words of the Bible, and, also, from the experience of the church, that when a child is come to years capable of being addressed by the Gospel, he is called upon to believe in Christ. Until then, he was incapable of acting on moral principles, and, consequently, incapable of breaking covenant with God, and, of course, must of necessity have his claims to the benefits of the covenant, until he has forfeited that claim by his own act and deed. Now, if the Bible shows that this is the nature of the covenant, then, it will appear, that this sentiment is correct.

In Gen. xvii. 9, "God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant, therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations." This plainly shows, that not only Abraham himself, but his seed after him, from one generation to antoher, were bound to keep the covenant, so that when the rising generation should come up to years capable of moral action, they were to walk in the steps of Abraham, or they would break

covenant with God, and forfeit their right to the promised blessings; so a believer's child, or children, while young, are placed in a covenant relation to God, and have a covenant claim to the blessing, while in infancy, but when they come to years they are bound to keep the covenant in their generation; and, if they reject the Gospel, when it is offered to them, they break the covenant, and forfeit the blessings to themselves, and their children. But when any of them believe in Christ, they engage in covenant with God for their own salvation, and, also, for the salvation of their children. Thus, it appears, that the nature of the covenant is such, that whenever a man, or a woman, believes, he, or she, not only acts for him, or herself, but, also, for his, or her, little children, if he, or she, has any, or ever will have any; and, every child, who is alive, and under age, at the time when the parent believed, or who shall be begotten afterwards, are, and shall be, fellow heirs of the blessings of the covenant, with the parent during the time of nonage. But when these children grow up, and are capable of acting for themselves, they are required to believe for themselves, and, if they do so, they keep the covenant, but, if not, they break the covenant, and are broken off from the stock; and, if they die in this state of unbelief, they will perish forever.

It is evident that Ishmael was broken off on these principles. He was taken into covenant by circumcision, when he was thirteen years old; he was fourteen years old when Isaac was born. Isaac, no doubt, was two, or three years old, when he was weaned, after which, when Ishmael was, at least, sixteen years of age, he was found mocking Isaac, who was the heir of the covenant, and the progenitor of Christ, the promised

seed. For this, he was cast out, and rejected of God. See Gen. xvi. 16, and xvii. 25, and xxi. 5, 9–12. Mocking is a phrase used in Scripture to signify reproach, rejection, and ridicule, or a virulent opposition of heart. Isaac was the promised seed, the heir of the promise to Abraham, and a type of Christ. It is evident that Ishmael was actuated by spite and malice against Isaac, and, therefore, his conduct evinced the opposition of his heart against Christ, the promised Messiah. Thus, Paul says, (Gal. iv. 29–31,) "As then, he who was born after the flesh, persecuted (mocked) him who was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." Thus, we see that Ishmael was esteemed as a persecutor of the church of Christ, and was, therefore, cast out of the covenant, although, when in a state of infancy, he was circumcised as a child of Abraham.

Esau is another remarkable instance. He and Jacob were grown to sufficient age, to engage in a solemn contract together, and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. By his birthright he claimed the priority in the blessings of his father, Abraham, and Isaac, but he sold this privilege for a mess of pottage. "Behold, I am at the point to die, (said he,) and what profit shall this birthright do to me." Thus, said Moses, "Esau despised his birthright." We are not to suppose, that Esau was in danger of starving to death in his father's house, where there was plenty; he was only very hungry, coming in from a long hunt, and was faint, for want of food; and seeing Jacob, his brother, have some exquisite cookery, which he dearly loved, and feeling a keen appetite, he requested his brother to feed him with it, Jacob seems to be the proprietor of the provisions which he had prepared, and refused to give to his brother, but on the costly condition of his giving up his birthright. The

language of Esau seems to be this: I am about to die, and will die long before my children will get possession of the promised land, and what good will this covenant do me, when I am dead and gone? And, therefore, to gratify his appetite, he conveyed away his birthright to his brother. Therefore, the Apostle, (Heb. xii. 16,) calls him a profuse person, for selling so inestimable a blessing, for a morsel of meat. Thus, Esau was cut off for his rejection of the covenant. Now, if Isaac and Jacob had done as Ishmael and Esau did, the whole family of Abraham would have been cut off. But God always has a remnant to preserve his church, although thousands have fallen in the sense which we are now explaining.

There were a blessed remnant among the Jews in the time of Christ, and his Apostles, who yielded to the Gospel, and were saved, they and their houses; for Christ directed his disciples to preach peace to the house, on condition the son of peace were there, and Peter told them, that the promise was to them, and to their children, on condition they, themselves, would repent, or believe, and be baptized But the great majority of the nation were like Ishmael, and Esau, they were come to years of discretion, and they mocked Jesus, and sold their birthright. Matt. xxvi. 67, 68, and xxvii. 39–43, and xxvi. 14–16. Therefore, the whole nation, except the believing remnant, were cut off, they and their children with them, and devoted to destruction.

Let us now inquire whether, under the New Testament dispensation, God proceeds on the same plan, in cutting off members of the christian church. We see many instances of families growing up in the fear of God, under the pious instructions of religious parents, and continuing from one generation to another in full membership in the church, enjoying all the precious

advantages of the Gospel; while other families, whose parents were an honor to religion, have gradually declined, as their children have grown up, and one generation had succeeded another, until at length they have lost their name and place in the house of God. Sometimes, and, indeed, frequently, in the same family, some of the children are religious, when they grow up, and others are not; some hold their place in the church, and others are careless and thoughtless, and fall off to the vanities of the world, and in process of time, are cut off from the communion of the faithful. We, also, find churches fall away on the same principles. The church at Rome was once a flourishing church, but now she has been for a long time, the mother of harlots, and properly, the synagogue of Satan. The churches of Asia were once flourishing churches, but are now overrun with Mahometans. These churches have not fallen, by personal believers falling from grace, but by the rising generation gradually leaving the principles of the Gospel, and becoming careless, hypocritical, and wicked.

But this passage of Scripture, which we have endeavored to explain in this lecture, is fully decisive on this point. In the first place, the Apostle, by inspiration, constitutes the first fruits and the lump, and the root and the branches, holy. This was the case with the Jews who were in covenant with God, as a nation, or as the family of Abraham. But they fell through unbelief: that is, in consequence of the generality of the nation becoming unbelievers. Not that these same persons who constitute the nation had been once believers, and had fallen away; but, because, the then present generation had grown up in unbelief, and, consequently, were broken off by reason of this very circumstance. But, said the Apostle to the christian church, under the Gos-

pel dispensation, "Take heed, be not high minded, but fear;" as though he should say, you are now constituted a christian church, in consequence of your faith in Christ, you are now all holy, the root is holy, so are the branches, you, and your children are now standing in a covenant relation to God. But take heed, you may not always be so; you have a lamentable example before you in the Jewish church; be not high minded, but fear. Why, what danger is there? The Jews were broken off because of unbelief, and remember that thou standest by faith. If God did not spare his own chosen people when they became a nation of unbeliever's, you may be assured, he will not spare you, if your children grow up in unbelief, as their's did. They were first constituted a church by the faith of their forefathers; you were constituted a church by your faith in Christ, so that you and your seed are now in covenant with God, by your reception of the Gospel, which they have rejected. See then, both the goodness, and severity of God; severity towards them who fell through unbelief; but goodness towards you. But you may rely on it, that this goodness toward you will continue no longer than you, as a church, continue believers. But, if ever your children, either through your carelessness, or through their inattention to your instructions, should grow up in unbelief, as the present generation of the Jews have done, God will assuredly cut you off as a church, as he has done them.

Thus we clearly see that the Gospel is held forth, in the word of God, on this very plan, that believers shall represent their children, and that the children of believers are embraced with their parents in the covenant of grace, while they are in a state of nonage; so that if they, or any of them, should die in a state of

minority, they shall be saved, according to the promise of God. On the other hand, if, when they grow to years capable of moral action, they will not comply with the terms of the Gospel—they, at that age, being from under the representation of their parents, do fall under condemnation, as unbelievers, and are cut off from God's covenant, as the Jews were. This clause of the Gospel (with others of the same kind; see John xv. 1–7; Rev. 2d and 3d chapters) plainly shows us that this representation does not effect any of a man's household, but those who are infants, and that if those infants reject the Gospel when they become moral agents, they lose their covenant right, by their own unbelief. This, then, is a scriptural plan, and we ought to believe it. But it is not only scriptural, it is also rational. Nothing can be more consistent with reason, than for parents to act for their children, as long as they are incapable of acting for themselves. And when we find that God has ordained in his word that our little infants shall be blessed with us, if they should die in their infantile state, represented according to the plan of the Gospel, by us, and partake with us of all the benefits of our faith, we feel it coinciding with all our natural attachments to our dear little ones, and are sincerely thankful that God—who is a covenant God to us—will also be a God to our children.

This plan is not only scriptural and rational, but it is also legal and just, according to all our notions of civil policy. All well regulated and civilized nations in the world, by their civil laws, protect little infants under the guardianship and representation of their parents; and all children remain in this state, under the protection of civil governments, in this manner, until they become of age; they then lose the representation of their

parents, and are, personally, under the government of the law, as proper subjects, capable of moral action. This policy we consider good, and founded on the proper principles of justice and equity. Why, then, should we complain, if God has constituted his Gospel on the very same principles. And when we can so understand and acquiesce in the principles of the government of our country, and feel ourselves so happy in the protection our civil laws afford to us, and to our little children, as good citizens, why can we not see and feel the goodness of our God, in affording to us the blessings of the Gospel, on the same just and equitable principles? And why cannot we understand the propriety of the plan of God, in ordaining that our children shall act for themselves when they come to years capable of moral action—when we can so easily see the justice of the laws of our country in doing the same thing? A great part of the world fondly imagine that their children are perfectly innocent, and, consequently, if they die, they will, of course, be happy. But this doctrine is false; because the word of God does not say that infants are innocent, and for us, who are *not* the judges, to pronounce them innocent, is of no avail, if God, who *is* the judge, has pronounced them guilty, in his word. See Ps. li. 5; Job xiv. 4, xv. 14, xxv. 4–6; Rom. iii. 10–19. Infants are, indeed, not guilty of actual sin, but they are, in the sight of God, fallen guilty creatures, as well as we; and God has said "that by the law no flesh shall be justified in his sight." It is, therefore, a high degree of assurance and deception, for us to say that infants are innocent, when God, in his word, has pronounced them guilty. But, again, it is said that Christ, by his death, took away all original sin, and therefore all infants are justified through Christ, and if they die before they

commit actual sin, they will go to heaven. This would be good divinity, if it were only true. But God, in his word, has not said it, and therefore it is nothing but the doctrine of man, and not of God, and consequently is vain, and not to be depended on. It is true, Christ's death does take away both original and actual sin, but from whom? All mankind? No, verily; but only from believers. "He who believeth, shall be saved; but he who believeth not, shall be damned." This is the doctrine of God, and anything otherwise, is the doctrine of men, and not of God, and therefore not true, but false and deceitful. The evident truth, asserted and confirmed by the whole tenor of the word of God, is, that if any person, male or female, high or low, rich or poor, old or young, be not a believer, he shall be damned. If, therefore, a man be a believer, he shall be saved, and his house. If an infant be a believer (Matt. xviii. 6,) it shall be saved, if it should die in a state of infancy; but if he should grow up to years capable of being personally addressed by the Gospel, and will not believe he must be cut off and lost forever. This is what the Scriptures hold forth; and if we wish to know and believe the truth, we should do like the honorable Berean's of old—search the Scriptures, and see whether these things be so, and not build upon our own foundation, and rest upon the mere imaginations and whimsical fancies of our own minds, or the vain notions and opinions of men.

The doctrine of the salvation of infants, through the faith of their parents, holds forth a double argument to us, to believe on Christ. Every man (or woman) who has, or even expects to have, a household, ought not only to get an interest in Christ, for his own sake, but also for the sake of his little one, whom he does, or may rep-

resent, whose eternal happiness may, and will, if they die infants, depend on his interest in Christ, according to the plan of the Gospel. Moreover, this doctrine enjoins it on all parents, who have children growing up, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; to store their minds with useful knowledge, that when they come to years of discretion, they may be fully prepared and furnished with arguments to believe in Christ, lest they be cut off from God's covenant, by their unbelief, and perish forever; and children ought to take heed to the religious instructions of their parents, and honor and obey them in the Lord, that they may early dedicate themselves to God, by faith, and become personally interested in the covenant of grace.

LECTURE XIX.

ROMANS XII. 1–21.

1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

2. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Paul had now finished the argumentative part of his epistle. He had argued the universal depravity of mankind, both Jews and Gentiles; he had argued the doctrine of justification by faith, through the righteousness of Christ—that this righteousness was imputed to believers on the same principles as original guilt was conveyed to the posterity of Adam, by covenant representation. He had argued the legal propriety of a sinner applying to Christ, as Christ had nullified the penal demands of the broken law, by his death, so that the believer would be as free from those legal demands, as a woman would be from the former husband, who is dead. He had answered objections against the doctrine of free grace. He had showed and demonstrated that the believer was perfectly free from condemnation, and was adopted as a child into the family of God's children, and made an heir to all the blessings of the Gospel, as he was united to Christ. He had argued and established the doctrine of personal election, and the most perfect

security of those who were the objects of God's unchangeable love.

He had also argued this doctrine as it related to the rejection of the Jews and the calling of the Gentiles. He had explained the nature of faith, and showed that churches and families stood fast in the covenant of God, by faith only, or were cut off by unbelief, &c.; and having now gone through these various subjects, he proceeds to give suitable instructions and exhortations, calculated to direct and encourage believers in their duty, that they might walk worthy of their happy vocation.

He called upon them, as his beloved brethren, to consider what boundless mercy God had bestowed on them, in giving his dear Son to die for them, and in sending them the Gospel, and granting the overtures of salvation to their needy souls. He earnestly beseeches them, from the consideration of the tender mercies of God, that they would devote their whole selves to Christ, by a cheerful dedication to him, not only of the spiritual powers and capacities of their souls, but even of their bodies, as instruments of obedience to him, according to the Gospel; which, indeed, was a most reasonable service, when God had done so much for them.

Christians are directed not to devote their time, and their powers of mind and body, to an undue conformity to the sentiments, customs, and practices of this vain and wicked world, which, by an improper attachment, would draw off their minds, and the minds of their children, from God and the Gospel. But, on the other hand, they ought to be transformed from the vanities and follies of the world, by the renewed principles of their hearts, always acting according to the principles of the Gospel, that they might more and more, experimentally and practically, know and understand the Gospel of

Christ, which is an exhibition of God's good will towards poor perishing sinners, and which is the only acceptable method of salvation, and founded on the most perfect principles, which only can make us perfect in holiness and happiness forever.

3. For I say, through the grace of God, given unto me, to every man who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Paul had never been at Rome, nor had he been the instrument of planting the church there; yet he addressed them, by his apostolic authority, which he had, in a most distinguished manner, received, by the grace of God, which was given to him, even when he was a persecutor of the church of Christ. He charged them not to be proud of their gifts and talents, lest it should eventually prove their downfall, as it did, to the unhappy nation of Israel. It seems as if the Apostle had a prophetic view of the cause of the fatal downfall of the Roman church. How would the proud, arrogant, and lordly successor of St. Peter feel under such a charge as this? I say to every one of you, individually, and as the Apostle of the Lord Jesus, I charge you not to think more highly of yourselves than is right, proper, and prudent for you to think; but to think modestly, and every one to estimate his standing in the church, according as God has graciously granted his gifts and graces unto him, as a believer. The word faith here, and in verse 6th, appears to be used to signify the gifts which God bestowed on believers. And Beza tells us that one of the old original copies has the word χαριτος (grace,) instead of the word πιστεως (faith;) at any rate, we have to explain it so, and very probably that is the true reading.

4. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office;

5. So we *being* many, are one body in Christ; and every one members one of another.

The beautiful simile of the human body (which the Apostle used more largely in 1 Cor. xii. 12–27,) is here used to represent the unity of the church, although composed of different members, and as one member of the body may have a different office from other members, yet each performs its different office for the good of the whole body, and all constitute but one body. So a church is composed of many members, and all constitute but one body; and each member occupies his particular place, and has his own particular gifts, and no one member—let his measure of grace be ever so much greater than another—has anything but what he has received. Therefore, every one ought to be humble and thankful, and guard against pride, and arrogant superiority.

6. Having then, gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophecy* according to the proportion of faith,

7. Or ministry, *let us wait on our* ministry, or he who teacheth, or teaching;

8. Or he who exhorteth, on exhortation: he who giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he who ruleth with diligence; he who sheweth mercy with cheerfulness.

The church is composed of members possessing different capacities, talents, and dispositions of mind; and God is pleased to call forth the different energies of some of her members, for the edification of the whole body. Those members who are called to fill particular stations in the church, are exhorted to endeavor honestly to exercise their respective gifts in their proper station, for the advantage of the body. Those who prophesy, are

first mentioned. Preachers were called prophets. See Matt. vii. 15–20; Exod. vii. 1, 2; 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1 John iv. 1. In the first ages of the church, prophets were public teachers, and preachers were sometimes endued with the spirit of prophecy, and therefore public teachers were called prophets. These preachers of the Gospel were exhorted to preach, or to explain the Scriptures, or even to exhibit new truths, which God was pleased to reveal—as some of them were inspired—with an humble dependence on God, and confidence in him; and they were forbidden to preach any doctrine but what was consistent with, according to αναλογιαν της πιστεως, the analogy of faith, that is, agreeable to the general system of the Gospel, as contained in the Holy Scriptures. No preacher is allowed to teach for doctrines the commandments of men, but must be careful to teach according to the doctrines of God's own word; and if a teacher, or any person, were to pretend that he had a revelation from God; if he taught doctrines, or precepts, contrary to the system of the word of God, it would be sufficient to prove him a false prophet. Public teachers were, therefore, directed to endeavor, with humility and diligence, to exercise whatever gifts they had, in directing and instructing the church, according to the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and not according to their own humors, or opinions.

The ministers, or pastors, who had the care of the church, were to attend conscientiously to their special duties. Those who were appointed teachers of the youth in the church, were to attend with care and diligence to this important branch of business. Exhorters were, probably, men appointed to lead the worship in social meetings, when their preachers, or pastors, were not present, or to exhort on any occasion, when it ap-

peared prudent or profitable. These were directed to attend to their duty. Those who were disposed to contribute of their substance to the church, for pious uses, ought to give with simplicity, that is, candid sincerity of heart, not grudgingly. "He that ruleth," προισαμενος, to wit, he who presides. In the Apostle's days every church was governed by its own members, consequently, at their church meetings, it was necessary for some one to preside, to keep good order, and direct the business. The president in such, or in any meetings, is directed to attend to his duty with diligence and care; also, those who extended their mercy and benevolence to the poor and needy, are directed to give their alms with a noble and cheerful benevolence.

9. *Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Love is a most valuable affection, and when it is placed on a right object it is truly virtuous, and tends to happiness and comfort. Love, when it is placed upon God and his people, is a distinguishing characteristic of God's children, and we are particularly exhorted to love one another, with a sincere, ingenuous affection, without deceit or hypocrisy. It is our duty to hate sin with an inward, hearty abhorrence, as that which is morally vile and contrary to the will of God. But we are to hold fast, by a steady and uniform attachment to that which is good, and morally excellent.

10. Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.

It is the duty of christians to exercise a complaisantial regard for each other. To feel a delight and a hearty affection for the people of God, is not only a command of Christ, but also an evidence of true religion. Chris-

tians ought to be humble, and disposed to put a due estimate on the worthiness of their fellow christians, and be more ready to honor others, than to exalt themselves.

11. Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.

It is right, and perfectly consistent with duty, that a christian should be industrious and active, not only in the things of religion, but also in the common business of life, in whatever honest occupation he may be engaged, for a comforable livelihood. He must not indulge in laziness, but he must quicken his spirit, and not give up to indolence. He ought to remember that God has made lawful industry one of the duties of religion, and, therefore, he should feel himself obedient to the Lord in providing for himself and his family.

12. Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.

The glorious hope that the Gospel gives, and on such solid grounds, is enough to make any christian rejoice. But we are too apt to indulge doubts and fears, and dispute our interest in the love of God. It is our duty to surrender our hearts to Christ, and also to commit our whole interest to his faithful care, and to rejoice in a steady hope of eternal happiness and glory, when we are done with this troublesome world. This would dispose and enable us to exercise a cordial submission to the will of God in all things, and to be patient under afflictions, and any kind of distress and persecution that might befall us. Especially should we daily cultivate in our minds a sense of our dependance on God, by the habitual practice of prayer, looking up to him for grace to direct and assist us in all things, who is infinitely

wise, good and powerful, and who has promised to make all things work together for our good.

13. Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Our poor and needy, brethren in the Lord, ought to be near our hearts, and we ought to relieve them, and supply their wants as far as we can, consistent with prudence; yea, we ought to be hospitable and benevolent to all men, exercising charity and good will towards all our fellow mortals.

14. Bless them who persecute you; bless and curse not.

15. Rejoice with them who do rejoice, and weep with them who weep.

We ought to feel a benevolent regard even to our enemies. Although we cannot feel a complaisance in them, nor approbate their conduct, yet we should not be provoked by their inimical and persecuting conduct towards us to wish them evil, but to wish well to their immortal souls, and that they might repent and turn from their sins; that we should conduct towards them so as to do them good if in our power, and not to indulge malice, spite, or revenge.

We should, moreover, possess and feel a spirit of sympathy towards all around us, so as to be happy in the happiness, and prosperity of those who are in comfortable circumstances, and also to sympathize with our suffering and afflicted friends and neighbors, and endeavor to administer comfort and relief to them in their distresses.

16. *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Unity in sentiment, ought to subsist among chris-

tians, as far as possible, in religion, and where differences of opinion take place, the unity of the mind, in love and christian forbearance, ought to be cultivated, and preserved, in the bond of peace and friendship; and christians should guard against anger, prejudice, disaffection and ambition. Even different persuasions, ought to cultivate a spirit of peace and christian friendship, especially in point of communion at the Lord's table. We are directed not to seek with ardent wishes and desires to be exalted to high stations, or to be imprudently attached to men of high rank and influence, but to be meek and lowly in our behavior, and to condescend to those who are in low circumstances, either as to mind or body. Remembering that God generally has his chosen people among the lower classes of mankind, and that Christ himself was humble, and conversed mostly with those of low degree. Christians are carefully warned against self-conceit. A proud, conceity man, is a disagreeable person; and, above all men in the world, self-conceit most illy becomes a humble disciple of the meek and lowly Saviour. What have we that we have not received? And if God has blessed us with gifts superior to others, it is not to swell us with pride, but that we might use them to the edification of our brethren.

17. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

18. If it be possible, live peaceably with all men.

The spirit of retaliation of evil for evil, is not the humble and benevolent Spirit of Christ, but the proud spirit of the wicked world. Human nature revolts at the mild rules, and examples of the blessed Jesus, and seeks the delicious gratification of revenging an injury; and we are often disposed to plead the violence of passion, as an excuse for doing what we know to be wrong.

But the mild and peaceable rules of the Gospel direct us to do no injury to any man, "but to provide things honest in the sight of all men," that is, (as it would be better rendered,) previously be attentive to what is respectable in the sight of all men. A christian ought to conduct himself with forethought, and not to act from a sudden flash of passion, and he ought to consider with himself, what would be evidently right in the view of common sense, so that he need not be under the necessity of excusing his conduct; and often, too, when his best excuse is his hasty temper, and the want of thought; and when, in most cases, he has at last to acknowledge that his conduct was inconsistent with reason, and the humble dictates of the Gospel.

We are, therefore, directed to live in friendship, and as much as is consistent with conscience, and the duties of religion, to be at peace with all men, both in the church and out of it, and to cultivate a good, obliging behavior, and general hospitality, towards all around us.

19. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath, for it is written—vengeace is mine; I will repay saith the Lord.

The Apostle, in a very tender manner, repeats the exhortation given in the seventeenth verse. We are forbidden to take vengeance at our own hand, for injuries done, or insults offered to us. We are not to deal out, or inflict punishment accordingly, as our interested, or angry, passionate judgment might dictate, but we are directed to give place to wrath; that is, we are not to resent, in anger, the wrath of our enemies, but let them go on, if they will, and take full scope, and vent their spite and revenge. But while we, with christian patience bear their insults, we are to guard against rendering evil for evil, submitting the punishment of such offenders to

the justice of God, who, as he has said, (Deut. xxxii. 35,) claims the prerogative of executing vengeance on the enemies of his people; and has promised that he will not suffer any injury, done to one of his children, to pass with impunity. This, however, is to be understood in a consistency with the natural laws of self-preservation.

20. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

This is a quotation from Prov. xxv. 21, 22. We are directed, that instead of avenging ourselves of our enemies, we should be hospitable and friendly to them; if they stand in need of any favor that we can conveniently afford them, we should oblige them, and not show spite, or a revengeful spirit. And, in so doing, our conduct will have a tendency to remove their enmity against us, and win their affections, as though melted down with kindness, and if it should not have this happy effect, it will evince to the world that they, and not we, are the guilty sinners, and we will turn the reproach which they intended to cast upon us, upon their own heads; and, even if they should still prove spiteful, after our exhibitions of brotherly tenderness, God will finally plead our cause, and our kindness shall fall with a double vengeance on their heads.

11. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

In striving thus to act with a becoming benevolence and patience, under even repeated injuries, we are not to give up to temptations, but still persist in well doing, not giving way to angry feelings that might possibly intrude upon us, but continuing steadfast in our duty with a becoming fortitude, in defiance of all opposition.

LECTURE XX.

ROMANS XIII. 1–14.

1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God.

It is certainly a wise and good order of divine Providence, that the world of mankind are governed by laws, which are, in a less, or greater degree, founded on the principles of justice; and that those laws are executed by civil officers appointed to do justice between man and man. The peace, comfort, safety and happiness of society, both civil and religious, depend on those civil regulations. Therefore, it is a solemn duty incumbent upon all, both religious and irreligious, to pay a due regard to the laws of the country in which they live, as far as is at all consistent with the duties of religion. This is the command of the Gospel of Christ, and it is impossible for a man to be disobedient to the just and reasonable laws of the state, without also disobeying the law of God, except the civil laws be contradictory to the laws of God.

We ought to consider magistrates as ordained of God, and we should revere and obey them as such.

2. Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they who resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.

Every one, whether he be a member of the church or not, if he resist the authority of the law, or of the execu-

tive officers of the state, is to be considered as resisting the authority which God himself has ordained, and, consequently, liable to be condemned and punished for his wickedness, not only by the civil magistrate, but also by God himself, whose just judgment he can not escape.

3. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou, then, not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.

4. For he is the minister of God to thee for good, but if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain, for he is the minister of God—a revenger, to *execute* wrath upon him who doeth evil.

Magistrates acting according to just and reasonable laws, are the guardians of virtue, and the terror of vice; we ought, therefore, to feel a reverence, and pay a due regard to their authority, as officers of the state, under God. And, if we be dutiful subjects, we will be honored and protected by our civil rulers, acting as God's ministers to our civil comfort and happiness. But if we are disobedient to the law, we have reason to fear the punishment justly due to us for our disobedience. For the magistrate acts for God, as well in punishing evil doers, as in protecting the innocent, and it is not in vain that he is clothed with the civil authority to execute the penalty of the law upon transgressors. So that we ought to be obedient, that we may live quiet and happy lives in whatever government we are placed.

5. Wherefore, ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but, also, for conscience sake.

Considering the laws of society, and the executive authorities, as a providential ordination of God, and the basis on which our lives, property, and liberties are guaranteed to us, we ought, in all conscience, to be obedient subjects, cultivating a reverenee for the civil authorities

of our country; and we ought not only to fear the civil punishment, which the law requires to be inflicted on transgressors, but we ought, also, to act conscientiously, from a due regard to duty, both toward the law and toward God, who has commanded us to live in obedience.

6. For, for this cause, pay ye tribute, also, for they are God's ministers attending continually upon this very thing.

7. Render, therefore, to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute *is due*, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

One of the special reasons why any kingdom, or government demands, and the subjects pay tribute, is, that the officers of government may be supported by a salary, sufficient to enable them to attend to their duty; for, to this they are called in the providence of God, as ministers of the state, to employ their time and talents in this very thing, which is, indeed, a business of very great importance both to church and state.

Therefore, as we enjoy the benefit of protection from the government of our country, it is our duty to render whatever is due, on any legal demand upon us, by the laws and regulations of our government. If tribute, or tax, be required, we should pay it. If we are required to pay custom on goods imported or exported, we should pay it also; we should not only be ready to pay our money for the support of government, but we should be disposed to treat men in authority with due respect and reverence; we should reverence their authority as God's ministers, and honor their persons for the sake of the office they bear under God.

8. Owe no man anything; but to love one another, for he who loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

9. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet;

and, if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying: thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

Every man should be careful to pay his debts, according to his engagements, with honesty, and with as much punctuality as possible; and he should not contract more debts than he is able to discharge, and we should keep back nothing which is due, by a covetous or a procrastinating disposition. In short, we should, as the Apostle beautifully expresses it, owe nothing but love to any man; and that is a debt which we should be always paying, although it can never be paid, and is always due; and he who is actuated by a principle of real regard to his neighbour, and acts accordingly, fulfills the whole law of God. For this precept, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, covet, or, if there be any prohibition expressed in any other words, the whole is briefly comprehended in this: (Levit. xix. 18, Matt. xix. 19.) "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The regard we have for ourselves, ought to regulate our regard for our neighbor.

10. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore, love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

It is not the nature of love to injure the persons beloved, therefore, if we love our neighbor, we will be naturally disposed, by this blessed disposition, to do anything in our power to him, and for him, which the law requires; and there is no injury done to a neighbor, unless it be through accident, but what is the consequence of some degree of disaffection.

11. And that knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep, for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

The Apostle called the Romans to consider this circumstance, knowing how the time was passing away,

that the hour was come when they should be roused from sloth and inactivity, and bestir themselves; for they had but little time now left to do anything for the cause of God and religion; for a considerable part of their time was gone, since they first embraced the Gospel, and the time of their death was much nearer now than it was then. Therefore, seeing all the space they had left, to do anything for the honor of the Gospel, was what was remaining from now, till they should be called to glory, they ought to bestir themselves, and try to do something for God, and, as much as they could, before they would leave the world.

12. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

The christian's time in this world the Apostle calls, night, and the time of death he calls day, because, the brightest times we enjoy now are no more than star, or moon light, compared with the time when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known. Inasmuch, therefore, as our dreary time here will soon be over, and the glorious day of eternal felicity is just at hand, we are exhorted to rouse up, and put off, or guard against, every sin, and to let our whole deportment be directed and guarded by the blessed light of the Gospel, which serves both as a light to direct, and an armor to defend us in the way of duty, that we may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

13. Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

Here the Apostle calls the present state of the church, day, when compared with the dark and dismal times of heathenism and idolatry, although but a dark twilight, compared to the glory of heaven. He, therefore, exhorts

us to walk gracefully, or honorably, both to ourselves, as christians. and to the cause of the Gospel, not like the wicked world, in riotous feasting and intoxication, not in chambering, that is, (χοιταις) supine indolence, and wantonness, that is, (ασελγειαις) lasciviousness, or it will signify any kind of impertinent behavior, or, as Dr. Doddridge thinks, "a soft, luxurious, and effeminate manner of life, and an affected delicacy, contrary to the character of a good soldier of Jesus Christ," not in contention and malicious controversies, so contrary to the mild dictates of christianity.

44. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to *fulfill* the lusts *thereof.*

This is a very noble, and nervous expression, indeed. Instead of indulging in the wicked and abominable practices prohibited above, the Apostle charges them to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ." Not only to stand fast in the righteousness of Christ, looking and depending on it only for their justification; but, also, to put on the innocent and holy character which Christ exhibited in his life and conversation, and walk even as he walked; personating, as it were, their blessed master, in the temper of their hearts, and in the practice of their lives. Thus: we are to give ourselves wholly to the Lord and to his service; and make no reserve for the gratification of sensual, sinful appetites and passions. In so doing, we will adorn the doctrines of Christ, and live to the furtherance and to the honor of the Gospel, and having done our part for the cause of religion during our short stay in this world, we shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

LECTURE XXI.

ROMANS XIV. 1-23.

1. Him who is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

Admit him to christian fellowship in the church, who is weak in the faith; without entering into dissensions about disputed matters. This the Apostle lays down as a general rule in the church. But, alas! how far are we from acting according to it, in many instances. If a man is guilty of what the Apostles call *heresy* he ought to be cast out, if he cannot be reclaimed; but, if his error be not of a damning nature, but only a non-essential doctrine or sentiment, which does not affect the vitals of religion, he ought to be borne with, in tenderness and christian forbearance. Lord remove from thy people that unhappy spirit of persecution, which so much prevails under the garb of orthodoxy, and grant a spirit of mutual forbearance and love, so that if thy children cannot agree in sentiment, they may embrace each other in charity. Amen and Amen.

2. For one believeth that he may eat all things, another who is weak eateth herbs.

3. Let not him who eateth despise him who eateth not; and let not him who eateth not, judge him who eateth, for God hath received him.

A Gentile convert, for instance, or a Jewish convert, who had got over his ceremonial prejudices, when sitting at feasts, would be free to eat any kind of meats set before him, without any scruple of conscience; while another,

more attached to the legal ceremonies of the Jews, would eat nothing that was legally unclean; or, perhaps, would abstain from flesh altogether, lest he should, through some mistake, or incidental circumstance, be polluted, and would, therefore, partake of nothing but vegetables. In such cases, the Apostle directed that he who could eat freely of everything set before him, should not censure him who could not, as weak, superstitious, &c.; neither should he who could not eat, censure him who could, as unclean and defiled; for this very good reason, because God had received them both; he bore with the weakness of which ever of the two was wrong; and, therefore, we ought to do so too.

4. Who art thou who judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand.

Every christian is a servant of Christ, and it is as absurd to condemn a weak brother, because of some imperfections which we may see in him, as it is for a person to meddle with another man's servant who did not please *him*. God, himself, has the sole prerogative of judging the members of his household, and he, by his divine power and grace, will uphold every child of his, notwithstanding all his weaknesses and shortcomings.

5. One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

The Jewish converts, at least, a number of them, still retained their conscientious observance of the Jewish Sabbath, and their set feasts, and preferred those ancient holy days above common days; other christians paid no regard to them, more than to the other days of the week. But we are not to understand this as intimating that the christian Sabbath was a matter of indifference among

either Jewish or Gentile converts; for it is evident that it was expressly called *the Lord's day*, and was regarded as sacred by all christians, and was the day on which they met for public worship, and the celebration of the holy supper. But with respect to the observance of festivals, the Apostle considered them as immaterial things, excepting, that every one ought to act according to the dictates of his own conscience; nevertheless, he should be careful that his conscience was well enlightened by the word of God.

6. He who regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he who regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He who eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he who eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Thus the Apostle draws the two instances together, and shows, that whatever difference there may be in the sentiment and practice of those who may differ about days, and meats, yet they both act from the same regard to the divine authority of God. They who regard a festival day, they do it for the Lord's sake, with reverence to his authority, as they believe; and they who do not regard such days, it is for the Lord's sake that they do not, believing that they were abrogated by his authority. So he who eateth meat, does it for the Lord's sake, and it is also for the Lord's sake that another abstains, both acting accordingly as they conceive to be consistent with the divine authority of Christ, and, consequently, they are both thankful for what they eat, although they do not eat alike. Both are religious, and they must bear with one another in things of less moment.

7. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Christians are the servants of Christ, and, as believers, devoted to him, they ought ever to act for his glory, and fulfill his divine purpose. If their lives are spared, it is to answer the purposes he has in view, and, when he calls them from time to eternity, it is because he has nothing here for them to do, and intends to take them to himself, where he has blessed employ for them; and neither life nor death can ever dissolve their relation to him, so that they belong to him, as his servants, and as his dear children, both living and dying, and he will be glorified in them, whether in life, or in death.

9. For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord, both of the dead and living.

Christ even died and rose, and lived again, for this purpose, that he might be the proprietor of his purchased people, both here and hereafter, living or dying, and to eternity; so that he is our rightful Lord, and sovereign, in whatever state we may be. Therefore, we belong to him, and are accountable to him only, and have no prerogative over the consciences of one another.

10. But (δε, therefore,) why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12. So, then, every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

If christians are all the purchase of Christ, and are made to partake of the benefits of his death, resurrection, and glorious intercession, what are we, that we should act as judges over our brethren in the Lord, and hold them at a distance, when their Lord and Master admits them to enjoy communion with himself. Our Lord said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." We

ought to be cautious how we treat God's people, when we all expect that both they and we must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We should remember that there is an appeal from our judgment, to an impartial bar, to a higher tribunal, where the weakest of our brethren will find a friend, and, probably, in many instances, an avenger of the wrongs done them in this world. And, indeed, it would seem a deplorable case, if any proud, bigoted brother should be compelled, by the final Judge, to lay down his crown at the feet of a poor, weak, despised brother, whom he has treated here with severity, in saying to him, "Stand off, for I am more holy than thou."

But there will be no time then to parley, for it is recorded by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xlv 23, that the Lord hath sworn by himself that every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to him. Therefore, as we expect to give an impartial account to God at the last day, we ought to be careful how we act towards our brethren here below, and the strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and exercise mutual forbearance, one towards another, as God has commanded us.

13. Let us not, therefore, judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

Here the Apostle draws a fair conclusion from the arguments he had advanced, that christians ought to be charitable and forbearing towards each other, and not rash, censorious and severe in their treatment of their weaker brethren; but to determine upon this, as an excellent *rule* that ought always to govern their conduct, to wit: "That no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall before his brother." That is, that none

should, by his improper conduct, be the occasion or the means of doing an injury to the comfort, happiness, or prosperity of his brother, in religion; either to lead him into sin, or draw him off from the simplicity of the Gospel, or his dependence on, or confidence in Christ. σκανδαλον. This is the word used in Matt. x. 6–9 and xvi. 23. Luke xvii. 1, 2. 1 Cor. viii. 13. Mark ix. 42–47. Matt. xi. 6 and xiii. 21, and many other such texts, all translated, offend, but the word means, as it is translated in this verse, a barrier, or hindrance, to keep sinners from believing in Christ, or an occasion to injure the progress of religion in a child of God, by which he is discouraged, or drawn off from Christ, to the wounding of his soul, and the loss of his hope and confidence.

14. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus Christ, that *there is* nothing unclean in itself. But to him who esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

The Apostle here, by the authority of Christ, pronounced that there were no provisions whatever morally unclean, and that those ceremonial laws which, under the Jewish economy, made a number of animals unclean, were abrogated under the Gospel, and christians were, therefore, at liberty to eat what they pleased. But some of the Jewish converts feeling a reverence for those laws, still felt disposed to observe them. Therefore the Apostle decided that it would be wrong for any person to do any thing which he believed to be forbidden, whether it were wrong, or not, in itself. Because if we do that which we believe to be sinful, even if we be mistaken, yet we act from a rebellious principle; so that if the thing be right, yet we act contrary to divine authority whenever we do what we believe to be forbidden. A man's opinion will not make right what is wrong, but

it may make it wrong for him to do what is right. Every one, therefore, ought to be careful to have his mind well informed.

15. But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably, destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

But although the ceremonial law be abrogated, yet it is not always proper to eat every kind of meat; for although there is nothing unclean in the meat itself, yet if a weak brother should be grieved—that is, if he should be led into sin by our conduct, which would cost him the grief and sorrow of repentance—we would act unbrotherly and contrary to the law of love and benevolence towards him. Therefore we ought to take care not to destroy the peace and comfort of a weak brother who is as dear to Christ, as the purchase of his precious blood, as those who are strong in faith and sound in judgment. See 1 Cor. viii. 11.

16. Let not, then, your good be evil spoken of.

17. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

18. For he who in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of men.

We are permitted to allow ourselves liberty to use things of indifference in themselves, at pleasure, provided we act prudently, so as not to give occasion to others to speak evil of us, and those who are weak ought to take care also not to conceit themselves wise above others, and unjustly speak evil, where there is no harm intended or thought of. For the kingdom of our blessed Saviour does not consist in nice punctilios, as to matters of mere indifference, but in justification through the righteousness of Christ, and peace with God, through faith in him, and that solid joy, comfort and happiness

which is communicated to our souls by the Holy Spirit of God. If any man is possessed of these, we ought to receive him and love him, whether he eat meat or herbs, whether he keep holy days or not, and admit him to fellowship and communion, and let him make the best he can of his little prejudices himself. But we ought always to be careful not to throw a stumbling block before him. And it is evident that he who possesses these qualifications, and is devoted to Christ, and interested in him, and obeys him on these radiant principles of the Gospel, is acceptable to God, and is to be considered as worthy to be approved by his fellow men—who are his brethren in the Lord—although he may differ from them in smaller matters.

19. Let us, therefore, follow after things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

We are exhorted to fall on those rules of conduct which tend to the peace and edification of the church, and try to be as little offensive and as far profitable to others as we can.

20. For meat, destroy not the work of God. All things, indeed, are pure, but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

We ought not to injure the progress and destroy the peace and comfort of any brother, let him be ever so weak and poor, for our own pleasure, in indulging ourselves in non-essential things, however innocent they may be in themselves, for he is the workmanship of God, not only as a creature considered, but also as a christian—he is the regenerating work of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Indeed, all things not prohibited are allowed to be used, under the christian dispensation, and not ceremonially unclean as they were under the law. Yet it is a

sin for a man to use indifferent things, if he knows it will offend, that is, throw a stumbling block—be a let or hindrance to any of his weak brethren.

21. *It is* good neither to eat flesh nor drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth or is offended, or is made weak.

It would be even commendable to abstain from every gratification in matters of indifference, rather than make a brother stumble, or draw him off from religion, or even weaken his faith and confidence in Christ, or, in any way, hinder his happiness or progress in religion.

22. Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God. Happy is he who condemeth not himself, in that thing which he alloweth.

If you are fully persuaded in your own mind that you are acting rightly in what you allow yourself to do, and are not straitened by ceremonial prejudices, or pharisaical niceties, and traditions, thou art a happy man, as far as this liberty can make you so. But you must take care, that you keep this to yourself, and your God, if there be any danger in injuring the comfort of your brethren, who may be weaker than you, and yet are equally dear to the Lord.

23. And he who doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith; for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

This text is very imprudently translated. I would translate it thus:—But he who judges differently, is condemned *as guilty*, if he eat, because he does not *act* according to his belief, for every thing that *is done* not according to *our* belief is a sin.

The sense is, he who does any thing which he judges to be wrong, is condemned as guilty of acting contrary to his own conscience; because he acts contrary to the persuasion of his own mind, and whatever we do contrary to what we believe to be right is sinful,

even if our judgment should be wrong. The person spoken of in the twenty-second verse, and the person spoken of in this verse, are evidently contrasted; the one is supposed to be clear of all difficulty, with respect to ceremonial uncleanness; he could, for instance, eat swine's flesh, which was prohibited as unclean, by the Jewish law, therefore if he eat of it, so as not to be offensive to his weak brethren, he was happy in the enjoyment of a good conscience before God in eating, according to the liberty of the Gospel. But this man in the twenty-third verse, is supposed to think differently from the former, and to judge with a diverse judgment, or with a decided opinion that swine's flesh was prohibited by the law of God. This man, if he eat, would be condemned, although the other would be clear of guilt, yet both doing the same action; because the one would act not only according to his own conscience, but according to the liberty which God gave under the Gospel; but the other, although he acted agreeably to the same liberty; yet through his ignorance he judged otherwise and, therefore, when he ate he did wrong, and was condemned by his own conscience for doing what he judged to be contrary to the will of God; for whatever a man does, even although it be right in itself, yet if he think it wrong, it is wrong for him to do it, because he acts contrary to what he conceives to be the will of God, and consequently acts from a rebellious principle.

Although the author of these lectures has, until lately, believed according to the common opinion of divines and commentators, that it is sinful to do that which we are in doubt about, as to its lawfulness; yet, when he comes to examine this text accurately, he cannot see any other explanation, he is authorised to give, than what is given above. How the translators ventured to construe the

word διακρινομενος by the phrase "*He that doubteth,*" I know not. I know it means *to give a different, or divided judgment,* and it is evident that the idea the Apostle intended to give, is, as is said above, that this man judged differently about meats, from the other in verse twenty-second, and that the one was clear, and the other guilty, in doing the same action; although the action was a matter of indifference in itself, and that the one acted according to his belief, and the other with a contrary opinion.

The construction of this text has itself proved a stumbling-block, and an occasion of sin, to many of the weak and desponding children of God with regard to the solemn duty of coming forward to the Lord's table. They not seeing their way clear, and not assured whether it was their duty to sit in communion or not, on the translation of this text, have concluded that it would be a damning sin for them to approach, because they were in doubt. Such weak christians ought to consider whether they were not in as much doubt about the duty of staying back, as going forward; and if they stayed back from the table, with as much doubt, as to the propriety of it, as to go forward, it would, on the same ground, be as great a sin. But at any rate, it is improper to apply this text to commanded duties, for the Apostle was arguing only about things which were indifferent, and to such things it can only apply.

But, as for the notion, that indifferent actions become sinful, if done in doubt, I must confess that I much scruple the truth of it, nor do I think that opinion at all established by the Greek, in the above text; nor do I think that it will accord with reason, or the word of God.

LECTURE XXII.

ROMANS XV. 1–33.

1. We, then, who are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

2. Let every one of us please *his* neighbor, for *his* good, to edification.

Those who are of riper knowledge, and more confirmed in religion, ought to deal tenderly with those who are more weak and unstable, and should make all possible allowance for them, and not arbitrarily censure and reproach them for their imperfections, nor ought we to act towards them merely to answer our own humors and selfish gratifications. We should all endeavor to be agreeable to each other, and to conduct so as to be a mutual benefit, to the edification of the church of Christ.

3. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, the reproaches of them who reproached thee, fell on me.

The tenderness of our blessed Lord towards his disciples, looking over their ignorance, and all their imperfections with a forgiving forbearance, and leading them on, as it were, gradually in the ways of truth and righteousness. And his forbearing temper towards sinners, and even towards his most violent persecutors, is, indeed, a most excellent example to his people, and severely reprimands the austere and supercilious conduct of the many, who profess to be his followers. Wickedness of every kind, may be said to be a reproach to God, and those who reproach the cause, or the people

of God, are considered as offering indignity to God himself. And Christ, as the Psalmist says, (Ps. lxix. 9,) bore, not only the sins of his people on the cross, but, also, persecutions, revilings, obloquy, and scorn, which fell upon him for his Father's sake.

4. For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

The Apostle recommended to them and to us, the holy Scriptures, as that blessed volume which contained the holy records of God, which were written, not only for the use of them to whom those writings were particularly addressed, but for ours, also, that we might have a comfortable hope in the proper exercise of patience, and the enjoyment of that comfort derived from the solid basis of God's eternal truth, contained in his blessed word.

5. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus.

God is long suffering and patient, he is merciful to our weaknesses, and bears with our infirmities, and he is the great source of our comfort and consolation. And if he would grant us, as the Apostle prays, to possess patience towards one another, and to help each other in the consolations of the Gospel, then we should conduct towards each other with that benevolent temper of heart, forbearance and charity which is recommended so highly to us, both by the command and example of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

6. That ye may with one mind, *and* one mouth, glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God is the common Father of his people, and he is the father of Christ, our blessed Redeemer, and we who

are made partakers of his everlasting love should ever be united, both in our hearts and voices, to glorify his name through Christ, his dear Son, and a sense of his goodness to us all, who are his children, ought ever to unite us together in the most cordial bonds of love and christian friendship.

7. Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

The Apostle exhorted us to receive one another, that both Jews and Gentiles should unite together in christian love, inasmuch as Jesus, who did for them all, had received them into his church, and made them fellow heirs of the blessings of his kingdom, that God might be glorified not only in the success of his Gospel over both Jews and Gentiles, but also in their cordial union and fellowship together, conducting towards each other as became brethren in their common Lord and Redeemer.

8. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers.

9. And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy—

In order to reconcile the Jews and Gentiles together, (which was a very great object in the Apostle's days, and no doubt will be a great object again when the Jews will be brought in,) the Apostle stated before them two very interesting considerations, to wit.: First. That Jesus Christ, who was the great plenipotentiary sent down from the court of Heaven to officiate as prime minister in the kingdom of his Father, was a Jew, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, and the offspring of David, according to the truth of God, and a fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers of the Jewish nation. His public ministry was also confined to the nation of Israel, and he commanded his Gospel first to be preached

to the Jews, even to the bloody city of Jerusalem. These considerations ought to induce the Gentiles to be well disposed toward their Jewish brethren, considering them as the channel (as was argued in Chapter xi. 16–24,) of mercy, which raised them from the depth of wretchedness and idolatry, to the enjoyment of the inestimable blessings of salvation.

Secondly. He called the Jewish converts to consider that God had graciously granted unto the Gentiles a name, and a place in his church, that they might be to the glory of his divine grace; and seeing it was his will that they should believe with you, as though the Apostle should say, of the grace of the Gospel, and to grant them acceptance and fellowship with him, you ought to receive them with cordiality for Christ's sake, who was also pleased to pluck you, yourselves, as brands from the burning, as a mere remnant, while he suffered your nation to go to destruction. On such a delicate subject, so humbling to the prejudice of the Jews, the Apostle thought it good to establish his ideas of God's granting his grace to the Gentiles, by several quotations from the prophecies.

9. —As it is written: For this cause I will confess thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

10. And again he saith, rejoice ye Gentiles with his people.

11. And again, praise the Lord all ye Gentiles and laud him all ye people.

12. And again, Esaias saith, there shall be a root of Jesse, and he who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him shall the Gentiles trust.

These prophecies show plainly that the Gentiles were to be called in by the Gospel, and that Jews and Gentiles were to join together in the public praise of the glorious Redeemer.

1. In Psalm xviii. 49, it is prophetically stated that the church should spread out among the Gentiles, and praise the name of the Lord. Those knees and tongues that had been employed in the worship of dumb and deaf idols, should be employed in concert with the people of God in worshipping and praising the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. In Deuteronomy xxxii. 43, the Gentiles were prophetically called upon to rejoice with the assemblies of God's people.

3. In Psalm cxvii. 1, all the Gentile nations, with their numerous inhabitants, in their various tongues, are called upon to praise the Lord, their Redeemer.

4, And in Isaiah xi. 10, the prophet particularly stated that Jesus would be the offspring of Jesse, the father of King David, to whom the promise was made that he should have a son who would not only reign over the people of Israel, but over the Gentiles also. He should be the root, from whom the church should be supplied with spiritual nourishment, and life, and the Gentiles should put their trust in him for their salvation.

These prophecies plainly showed that God intended his church, under the Gospel dispensation, to consist of both Jews and Gentiles, and therefore they ought to embrace each other in cordial benevolence and christian friendship, as constituting one body in the Lord.

13. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy, and peace in believing; that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Apostle expresses a warm and earnest desire that, seeing they, both Jews and Gentiles, had such good reasons to be united in love, they would feel a cordial attachment to each other, as fellow members of one body, and

that in so doing the blessed God, by whose Gospel they enjoyed a comfortable hope of happiness and glory, would fill them with comfort and rejoicing in a happy state of peace with one another, and reconciliation to him through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he would enable them to increase daily in the comfortable hope of the Gospel, attended with the power of the Holy Spirit on their hearts.

14. And I, myself, also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye, also, are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able, also, to admonish one another.

Probably, the Apostle had been well informed as to the flourishing state of the church at Rome. And he gives them to know that he was not prompted to write to them from any suspicion he had of their being deficient in their duty, or in their knowledge of the principles of the Gospel. Nay, he lets them know that he was fully satisfied that they abounded in every good thing; that they were not only blessed with the divine goodness of the Gospel, but also that they were good and benevolent, brotherly, indulgent, and charitable to one another, although they were a body composed of Jews and Gentiles, and that they had a competent knowledge of their duty as christians, from their acquaintance with the doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, and that they were able to instruct and admonish one another in the things of religion to their mutual edification.

15. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you, in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God.

16. That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles; ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

These two verses are not exactly translated so as to

give the Apostle's ideas, either fully or clearly. I think they would be better translated thus: Nevertheless, brethren, I have written to you the more boldly, partly as bringing you to recollect concerning the grace that was given to me of God, *to wit*, that I should be the envoy of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, in my sacred office administering the Gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

Here, the Apostle told them, at least, a considerable part of the reason, why he wrote so copiously to them, even because he was fully authorized to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, as they might remember, appointed by Jesus Christ to labor in the Gospel which God had committed to him. He seems to give the idea that he was vested with the sacred orders, to have an oversight of the Gospel preached to the Gentile churches, so that he might be instrumental, in the hands of God, to render the worship and religious exercises of the Gentiles acceptable to God, as being drawn off from idols, and directed in a pure and holy manner to God, under the divine influences of the Holy Spirit, according to the pure dictates of the Gospel of Christ.

17. I have, therefore, whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

As Paul was called of God to the sacred office of the apostleship to the Gentiles, he had matter of thankful rejoicing, or glorying in Jesus Christ, who was pleased to appoint him to that important office, by which appointment he was called from being a violent persecutor, to officiate in matters pertaining to the great cause of God and the Gospel. In this, the Apostle possessed a most excellent disposition of mind. He evidently

appears to be very far from vain or ostentatious boasting; yet he was very sensible of the great grace that was conferred upon him by the Lord Jesus Christ, in putting him into the ministry. He was sensible of the honor done him, and felt himself greatly favored; but he also felt his unworthiness to be called an Apostle, and counted himself less than the least of all saints.

18. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which God has not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed.

19. Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the Gospel of Christ.

In order to evince to the Roman converts that he was, indeed, an Apostle, authorized and sent by Jesus Christ to preach to the Gentiles, Paul proceeded to give a sketch of his travels, principally through the Gentile world, and the great success he had had, by the power of Christ, accompanying the Gospel. But he declared that he would not speak a word of what was done by others, but what he, himself, was instrumental in doing; neither would he speak of what he had done, but what Christ had done by him, in making the Gentiles obedient, both in professing their faith in Christ, and in showing forth their interest in him by their life and conduct. The divine power of Christ, in attesting the truth of the Gospel, and also the Apostle's commission to preach it, were exhibited by mighty signs and wonders, which the Apostle wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. And thus attended by the power of God, he traveled through large tracts of country, and planted a great many churches. So that from Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, in a very extensive compass, through Syria, lesser Asia, and Asia proconsular, and as far north as

Galatia, and across the Egean Sea into Europe, in the country of Greece, and the extensive country of Macedonia, even to the confines of Illyrium, he had planted many flourishing churches, and extensively preached the glorious Gospel of Christ. This short statement was well calculated to give the church at Rome a view of the Apostle's labors and success in the Gospel, and also to convince them that he was indeed an Apostle of the Lord Jesus.

20. Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation.

The Apostle, here, evidently shows that he acted with an exalted ambition in preaching the Gospel. But Paul's character, so dignified with the most exalted benevolence, tenderness and friendship, not only towards believers in general, but also towards his brethren in the Gospel; and his zeal for, and attachment to, the cause of Christ, will forever forbid us to impute to him an unworthy spirit of pride and self-applause. He had often preached where the Gospel had been preached before, in Jerusalem, at Antioch, and at Damascus, and probably many other places. But his ambition was according to his commission, (Acts xxii. 18–21.) He wished to carry the Gospel abroad; he felt it an agreeable duty to preach Christ to those who had never heard of his name before. This was the command of his Master, whose kingdom he was zealous of extending all over the world. He did not wish to spend his time in building where others had laid the foundation; he let those do that who had nothing else to do; as for himself, he had to plant churches, and encounter the toils and dangers of pulling down idol temples, and building temples for his Lord and Master. This was a noble kind of ambition, indeed.

May the Lord inspire us all with such zeal for the glory of Christ's kingdom.

21. But as it is written: To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see; and they who have not heard shall understand.

In acting as the Apostle did, he was instrumental in fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah lii. 15. Those nations to whom the name of Christ had never been revealed, shall be blessed with the revelation of the Gospel, and the glad messages of grace shall be considered and understood by those who had never before heard them.

22. For which cause, also, I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23. But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire, these many years, to come unto you;

24. Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you; for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

The Apostle had been very busily employed in preaching the Gospel to those destitute parts, through which he had traveled; he had spent sometime in Corinth, where he wrote this epistle; he was, therefore, hindered from going to Rome, as he seemed earnestly to desire. But now, he had no particular door of usefulness open, in those Grecian countries, where he had been for some time; he, therefore, expressed an inclination to gratify an earnest desire he had for many years, of paying them a visit at Rome. And as he intended to go into Spain as soon as he should take a tour to Jerusalem, he promised that he would call upon them on his way, and stay with them until he should be refreshed with their company, and spiritual entertainment, and he hoped to be helped forward by them on his way to Spain, which was a large tract of country, lying west of Italy, where, probably, the Gospel had never been preached.

25. But now, I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

26. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain contribution for the poor saints, who are at Jerusalem.

27. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is, also, to minister unto them in carnal things.

The first thing the Apostle had in view, was to go to Jerusalem, to carry a considerable contribution, collected from the European churches in Greece, and Macedonia, for the benefit of the poor saints in that city. Generally, God has chosen the poor and the needy of this world, to be rich in faith, and the saints at Jerusalem were harrassed continually with persecution. Paul gave it as his decided opinion, that, as the Gentiles received the spiritual blessings of the Gospel from the Jews, it was their duty to contribute generously to them of their temporal things, as these churches had done. It is, indeed, an ordinance of God, that those who enjoy the spiritual advantages of the Gospel, should contribute of their worldly substance, to those whom God has made his instruments, in granting them the Gospel. The contribution which is necessary to support, either the poor, or the ministers of the Gospel, is a debt we owe, not to the poor, or to preachers, but to God. He considers what is done to his ministers, and to his people, as done to himself, and what we owe to them, we owe to him, and he will require it at our hands, and if we pay him, he will reward us according to our liberality, which will be rated according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. But if we will not pay him in this world, he will have it, in his own coin, in the world to come, both principal and interest. The members of Christ's church ought to take care, lest their Lord and Master bring forward a heavy bill of arrearages against

them on the day of judgment, which may, perhaps, put out some of the diamonds of their crown to pay for their love of gold in this world, when their gold will be all burnt up.

28. When, therefore, I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

It was the purpose of the Apostle, to call on the church at Rome on his way to Spain, and he assured them of this, his friendly design, which, God willing, he would endeavor to effect, after he had accomplished his journey to Jerusalem, and had carried to the poor saints these, the contributions of the European churches, which would be to the saints at Jerusalem, a proof, and a confirmation of the happy effects of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and of their love, and tender regard for their Jewish brethren.

29. And I am sure, that when I come unto you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

Paul was a man of strong faith, and knew well how to preach the Gospel, for he was taught it of God. Therefore, he knew, and was determined that when he should come to Rome, he would come as an ambassador of Christ, and would preach the Gospel to them in its rich and abundant blessings overtured to poor, perishing sinners, and in the abundant consolations, and comforts, which it affords to believers. The Apostle knew this, because he was determined to preach no other doctrines, than the simple doctrines of the cross of Christ. Probably, the church at Rome might imagine that, as they had lived in the great Metropolis of the world, the great Apostle to the Gentiles would aim at high elegance of style, and endeavor to conform to the learned and polished etiquette of Roman eloquence. But the

Apostle gave them to expect nothing from him, but Jesus Christ and him crucified. Would to God that all the churches in America, would expect and receive no other kind of preaching.

30. Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me.

31. That I may be delivered from them, who do not believe in Judea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints.

32. That I may come unto you with joy, by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

The ministers of the Gospel need the prayers of the people of God. If the Apostle Paul needed them, much more do we, and if the church were under obligations to pray for him, much more ought they to pray for us. Paul expressed great earnestness, in his desires, that the Roman christians should even strive, not only individually, but in concert, as a church, and with himself, in their prayers for him. He besought them, for Christ's sake—that is, for the regard they had for the cause and interest of the Redeemer, and for the love of the Spirit—that is, for the sake of that christian love they had for him, as an Apostle of Christ, which love, the holy Spirit had wrought in their hearts. He requested them to pray for four things, first, that he might be delivered from the Jewish Sanhedrim, and others, who were, by this time, hardened against the Gospel, and almost ripe for destruction; second, that through the kind, preserving goodness of God, he might make his way safe to Jerusalem, and carry the contributions, and deliver them safe to the poor saints in that place. And that they might have hearts to receive the bounty of the Gentile converts, without prejudice, but with brotherly affection

and christian love, and becoming gratitude; third, that he might come to them in peace and comfort, and that they might have a friendly and comfortable meeting, through the conduct of divine Providence; and fourth, that he might be comfortably refreshed with them, not only re-united by their benevolence, after a very long journey, but also refreshed, cheered, and comforted in his soul, by their christian fellowship, and mutual enjoyments in religion.

33. Now, the God of peace, *be* with you all. Amen.

In the last place, in the close of his epistle, (except some friendly salutations,) the Apostle closed with an earnest prayer, that the God of peace, who hath reconciled us to himself by the blood of his dear Son, and who begets in us, by his Spirit, a friendly, peaceable, and benevolent disposition of heart towards one another, might be with them, rule in them, and be the blessed object of their love, worship, and reverence, Amen. So let it be.

LECTURE XXIII.

ROMANS XVI. 1–27.

1. I commend unto you, Phebe, our sister, who is a servant of the church of Cenchrea:
2. That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

The Apostle gave a note of recommendation relative to Phebe, recommending her to their friendship as a christian sister, and that they would give her all necessary assistance in whatever was proper in accomplishing her business in Rome. Phebe was a servant—probably a deaconness in the church in Cenchrea. Cenchrea was the port town in the suburbs of the city Corinth. By this it appears that there were more churches than one, in that city. Phebe appears to be a woman of high standing in the church; she had been helpful to many, and the Apostle acknowledges the help she had given to him.

3. Greet Priscilla, and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus;
4. Who for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom, not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.
5. Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

Paul first became acquainted with Priscilla and Aquila at Corinth, on his first visit to that city, (Acts xviii. 1, 2.) He took them with him from Corinth to Ephesus, and left them there, when he went to Jerusalem. They were at Ephesus, and had a church constituted in their

house, when Apollos came thither, (Acts xviii. 24–27; 1 Cor. xvi. 19.) When Paul returned from Jerusalem, and came to Ephesus the second time, and wrote his first epistle from thence to the Corinthians, Aquila and Priscilla were still there, and joined him in sending salutations to that church, (1 Cor. xvi. 19.) They had been expelled from Rome—they being Jews—by an edict of the Emperor Claudius. But it appears that after this they returned to Rome again—that edict probably being repealed by Nero, who succeeded Claudius—and they were at Rome when the Apostle wrote this epistle, and sent it from Corinth. These were two amiable persons, and very dear to Paul, and very helpful to him, and had exposed themselves to eminent danger on his account, and for the sake of the Gospel, which the Apostle remembered with thankfulness; and even the churches of the Gentiles owed their gratitude, not only for their exertions to preserve the most valuable life of the Apostle, but also for their activity and influence in furthering the cause of the Gospel. Aquila and Priscilla had a church in their house at Ephesus, and now they had a church in their house at Rome, and Paul sent kind salutations to them.

5. Salute my well beloved Epenetus, who is the first fruits of Achaia, unto Christ.

Epenetus was one of the first who was converted to christianity in Greece—no doubt in Corinth—and it may be he was one of the happy household of Stephanus. (1 Cor. xvi. 15.) He was dear to the Apostle, and he had now gone to Rome.

6. Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us.

We know not what Mary this was, only she was a

friend, and spared no labor to be helpful to Paul and his companions, and was now removed to Rome.

7. Salute Andronicus and Junia my kinsmen, and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the Apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

These two men were early converts to christianity, and were well known to the Apostle in Judea: perhaps they were living in Jerusalem at the first preaching of the Gospel, and went to Rome. They were Paul's kinsmen, and seem to be well known to him as men who were called to embrace the Gospel, when he was a violent persecutor. Paul also calls them his fellow prisoners, which shows that they were with him in some parts of his persecutions for the sake of the Gospel.

8. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord.

9. Salute Urbane our helper in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved.

10. Salute Appelles, approved in Christ; salute them who are of Aristobulus' household.

11. Salute Herodion, my kinsman. Greet them who are of the *household* of Narcissus; who are in the Lord.

Amplias, Urbane, Stachys, Apelles, and Herodion, were all dear to the Apostle, as beloved christians. But it is thought that Aristobulus and Narcissus were not christians; and it is said in history that Narcissus was a powerful and a very wicked man, but they were rich, and had a number of slaves, and some of those poor, abject creatures, were converted, and were dear to God, and, consequently, dear to the Apostle; although he had never seen them, he therefore desires to be remembered to them.

12 Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labor in the Lord; salute the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord.

13. Salute Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, and mine.

These three excellent women were dear to the Apostle,

as they had, in their proper sphere, done much for the furtherance of the Gospel. Some have thought that Rufus was Paul's half brother; but it is much more probable he was the son of Simon, the Cyrenean, who bore the cross after Jesus (Mark xv. 21,) and his mother was so kind and hospitable to the Apostle, that he, in gratitude to her, called her his mother.

14. Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them.

15. Salute Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

Whether Paul had been acquainted with any or all of these persons, or had only heard of them, we cannot say; but, doubtless, he had, by some means, a knowledge of them, which induced him to acknowledge them in this epistle with due respect, and all the saints connected with them. What a benevolent mind the Apostle had; he seemed to feel all tenderness and regard for all his christian brethren in the Lord, and to feel with gratitude every thing they had done, either for himself or the church.

16. Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.

It was customary among the Jews to salute each other, both men and women, and express their friendly regard by kissing, (see Gen. xxvii. 26, 27; Luke xv. 20, and xxii. 47, 48; Matt. xxvi. 48, 49: 1 Pet. v. 14, &c.;) hence the Greek word which was used to signify a kiss, properly signifies *love* or *friendship*. A holy kiss was that salutation which christians used, to show their love to each other, for the sake of religion. It was, indeed, truly significant and pleasing, to see converted Jews and Gentiles, when they met for public worship, or when they parted, kissing each other as a testimony of their

mutual friendship towards each other in the Lord. No doubt, the friendly Apostle had a view to this pleasing circumstance, when he gave them directions thus to show their love one towards another.

Paul also sent the salutation of the churches in Greece, probably he meant the churches in Corinth, as there were more than one church, or organized society, in the city. There were at least two, one in the main city, and one in Cenchrea, in the suburbs, and called the seaport of Corinth.

17. Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them who cause divisions, and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.

18. For they who are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Here the Apostle enters a solemn *caveat* against those who might arise among them, or come from whatever quarter, and cause divisions or cast stumbling blocks to draw them off from the genuine doctrines which the inspired apostles of Christ had taught them, as exemplified in this epistle; as they were endued with the Holy Ghost, and authorised to teach and preach the only standard doctrines which were to be the keys of the kingdom, by which every other doctrine was to be tried, and if any one should attempt to subvert the doctrines which they learned from such good authority, and draw them off from the simple truths of Christ, he enjoined it upon them to notice such, and avoid them as dangerous and infectious persons.

Such teachers do not serve the cause of Christ, or act for the glory and furtherance of his kingdom, but are actuated by selfish motives, either for a subsistence or to answer some other sinister views, and they are often

cunning, designing men, and by their fine, enticing manner of address, and charming eloquence, they are apt to deceive, especially the minds of those who are ακακων, innocent, undiscerning persons, whose judgments are not strong enough to guard against the insinuations of such false teachers. The shocking heresies which have since taken place in the church of Rome is, indeed, a striking proof of the need this church had of this solemn admonition.

19. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad, therefore, on your behalf. But I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

The Apostle had before reminded them of their present good standing as a church, and rejoiced that they were so attached to the truth, in humble obedience to the divine doctrines of the Gospel. He stated this before them, not to flatter their pride, but as a strong argument to induce them to stand fast in the faith, that they might retain that worthy character, which they had gained, and not suffer themselves to be drawn off from the simplicity of the Gospel. Therefore he wished them to be daily increasing in their wisdom and knowledge as to that which is truly good, but to be innocent as to any kind of evil, both in themselves, as individuals, and as a church.

The author cannot but notice the strength and beauty of the Apostle's language, which is greatly eclipsed by translating it into English. The word translated simple in the eighteenth verse, properly signifies innocent, meaning no harm. Those weak, innocent, undesigning persons are the most apt to be unawares, taken in by cunning, artful teachers, smooth words and eloquent harangues. But the word ακεραιους in this verse, translated simple, properly means to be without horns. This is an allusion to an ox. A horned bullock is an offensive animal;

therefore wicked men are compared to the bulls of Bashan, goring the people of God. (Psalms xxii. 12.) The Apostle wished his brethren to be wise as to that which would tend to the good of their own souls, and to the good of the church, but as to that which would injure themselves, or injure the peace and harmony of the church, he wished them to be as oxen without horns: not having any offensive weapons. Alas! what mischief do christians do in the church, and to their brethren, by goring one another, like the horned herds of the forest.

20. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

God is a God of peace. He, in the Gospel, proclaims peace, and good will to men, and is the great author of that peaceable temper of heart which his people possess. He loves peace in his church, and commands his people to be at peace with one another. He will shortly give his people a complete and final victory over Satan—the infernal foe and disturber of the peace of the church. But the Apostle, also, probably spoke this sentence prophetically. The Jews were under the influence of Satan, and were the mortal enemies of the christian church, and were the peculiar persecutors of the church, until Jerusalem was destroyed. That bloody city was destroyed about ten years after this epistle was written, and there was an end to all difficulty and trouble arising from the Jews. This was bruising Satan under their feet.

But the Apostle spoke particularly of false Judaising teachers. He had had great trouble with them, and they were a constant pest to churches while ever Jerusalem stood. These false teachers were under the influence of Satan, and greatly disturbed the peace and progress of religion. Paul had to combat them almost wherever he went—at Antioch, at Corinth, at Galatia, &c. Heathen philosophy had not yet made way into the

church, but the object of Satan was to carry the christian church off from the simplicity of the Gospel, and turn the doctrines of Christ into mere Jewish legalism. But Jerusalem shortly after this fell, and there was an end of Judaising teachers.

The venerable Apostle concluded with a fervent prayer, or benediction, that the constant, comforting, directing and preserving grace of Christ, the great head of the church might be with them. Amen. So let it be.

21. Timotheus, my work-fellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen salute you.

Here Paul sends the salutation of his companions and friends. Timothy he had taken with him from Lystra, in Asia Minor, and he was a faithful fellow laborer in the Gospel. Lucius was one of the teachers at Antioch, who also traveled sometimes with Paul Jason and Sosipater were Paul's relations. Jason was of Thessalonica, and Sosipater of Berea. They all sent salutations to Rome.

22. I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, salute you in the Lord.

Paul did not write this epistle himself, but he dictated it, and Silas, his companion, wrote it. Silas traveled with Paul from Antioch, after he had parted with Barnabas. His Hebrew name was Silas, but as he was writing to Rome he wrote his Roman name, Tertius.

23. Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, salute you. Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, saluteth you, and Quartus a brother.

Probably this is the same Gaius to whom St. John wrote his third epistle. Paul and his companions lodged with him, at Corinth, and he appears to be such a hospitable man that he was a public benefit to the whole Corinthian church. Erastus was the steward, or treasurer of the city, who was a professor of religion, and Quartus, who was a respectable brother.

24. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

The Apostle again sends his benediction to his beloved brethren at Rome.

25. Now to him who is of power to establish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26. But now is made manifest and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith:

27. To God, only wise, *be* glory, through Jesus Christ, for ever. Amen.

The Apostle concluded his epistle by a solemn ascription of praise and glory to God, through Jesus Christ. God, who is the proper object of the worship of the church, is a God of almighty power, and he can establish his church, and will establish her on the proper principles of the Gospel, which Paul and the other Apostles preached, and according to the declaration of Christ himself, who came into the world to make a revelation of the mystery of salvation, which was hid from the Gentile world until the fulness of time came, when salvation was to be preached to all the nations of the earth. This glorious time of the public revelation of the Gospel, through the crucified Redeemer, was predicted by the prophets of old, and now the way of salvation is made known, according to the command of the ever blessed and eternal God, which he gave to his disciples, saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature;" so that all people, of what ever nation, or language, are now called to obey the call of the Gospel of Christ; and now, to that God who has given such a display of infinite wisdom in this wonderful plan of redemption, be everlasting glory ascribed, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer. Amen. So let it be.

FINIS.